OLD!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC GAM

# retro GAMER™

ORE | SEGA | NINTENDO | ATARI | SINCLAIR | NEO GEO | SONY | COIN-OP

## INSIDE THE C64

HOW THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLING 8-BIT COMPUTER WAS CREATED

CAPCOM

YOUR

# 150

DOOM

THE MAKING OF RESI 4

Rock Band 3

SEGA

KONAMI

JET SET WILLY

Yu Suzuki

# GREATEST GAMES EVER!

GAMING LEGENDS CELEBRATE YOUR PERSONAL PICKS

sinclair

THE HISTORY OF Nintendo

ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING
Digital Edition
GreatDigitalMags.com
ISSUE 150

SID MEIER TALKS CIVILIZATION

# THE RETROBATES

WHAT'S YOUR YOUR BEST GAMING PRESENT



## DARRAN JONES

It has to be the Amstrad CPC464 that I received for my 14th birthday. Little did I know it would spark a lifelong obsession.

**Expertise:**
Juggling a gorgeous wife, two beautiful girls and an award-winning magazine.

**Currently playing:**
*Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Strider*



## NICK THORPE

I'll never forget getting a Master System II for my birthday – when my mum set it up, she rolled the TV stand over a balloon and thought she'd blown it up!

**Expertise:**
Owning six Master Systems (I sold one)

**Currently playing:**
*The Last Of Us*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Sonic The Hedgehog*



## PAUL DRURY

Undoubtedly the Vic-20 I found under the tree on Christmas Day 1982. The MicroVision I got the year before comes in at a close second.

**Expertise:**
The third elevator level

**Currently playing:**
*Guitar Hero Live*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Sheep In Space*



## GRAEME MASON

During the golden period of Speccy gaming, I received a bundle of games for Christmas one year, including *The Great Escape*, *Cobra*, *Uridium* and *Firelord*. Happy days.

**Expertise:**
Adjusting the tape azimuth with a screwdriver

**Currently playing:**
*Fallout 4*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Resident Evil 4*



## DAVID CROOKES

Original artwork from the first *Broken Sword* game thanks to the generosity of Charles Cecil some time back.

**Expertise:**
Amstrad, Lynx, adventures, Dizzy, and PlayStation (but is it retro? Debate!)

**Currently playing:**
*Broken Sword 5: The Serpent's Curse*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Broken Sword*



## MARTYN CARROLL

My Spectrum was a hand-me-down, so best present would be an unexpected Game Boy, with *Tetris*, when I was about 13. And I still own it.

**Expertise:**
Sinclair stuff

**Currently playing:**
*Super Mario Galaxy 2*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Jet Set Willy*



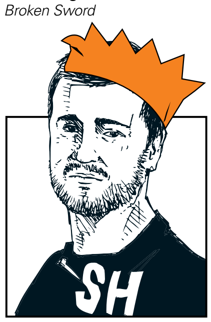
## RICHARD BURTON

That would be Christmas 1984 and my Amstrad CPC464 complete with *Manic Miner*, *Pyjamarama* and *Hunter Killer*.

**Expertise:**
Time Travel

**Currently playing:**
*Burnout 3: Takedown*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Manic Miner*



## STEVE HOLMES

I recently got an awesome *Majora's Mask* T-shirt, but the best was undoubtedly when my mum got me an N64 for Christmas. Unbelievably exciting.

**Expertise:**
Force lightning

**Currently playing:**
*Fallout 4*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Dark Souls*



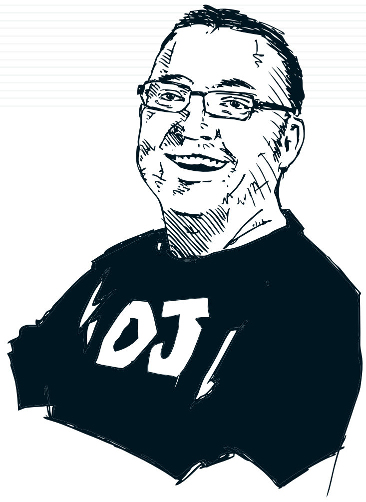
## JON WELLS

It has to be the Christmas when me and my brother received a NES complete with *Super Mario Bros. 2*, *WWF Wrestlemania* and *TMNT 2 Arcade*. This was where gaming started for me.

**Expertise:**
Tackling dirty nappies and retro spreads

**Currently playing:**
*COD: Black Ops III*

**Favourite game of all time:**
*Super Mario World*



# LOADING...

It's celebrations all around! This is not only the 150th issue of the magazine, but also our tenth year making it. We relaunched **Retro Gamer** in December 2005 and it's been an amazing ride ever since.

We asked you over several months what the greatest games of all time were. You send in thousands of votes for hundreds of games and it felt only fair to dedicate issue 150 over to your choices. In addition to the biggest list we've ever done, we've also concentrated on great features which all represent your final list choices.

I won't spoil anything, but I will say they span the entire range of retro, from the earliest 8-bit games to more modern systems like the GameCube. We're aware that in the last decade of **Retro Gamer** more and more younger gamers are joining the old guard and your new list is indicative of that. Some will bemoan classics falling to the newer guard, but it's a testament to the list found in issue 8 that 61 of the original games remain, which proves to us that a good game is a good game forever. Retro gaming is a never-ending hobby, an enjoyable pursuit that widens its reach as time moves on. Little wonder then that I'm still enjoying the ride. Hopefully, you are too.

Enjoy the magazine!



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>> **Load 150** Breathing new life into classic games


RetroGamerUK

@RetroGamer_Mag

retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk










» As this early artwork suggests, *Sociable Soccer* will continue with *Sensible Soccer*'s quirky sense of humour.

# THE RETURN OF THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

## Kick Off and Sensible Soccer return with spiritual updates

**On the 14th October *Dino Dini*, creator of *Kick Off* and *Kick Off 2*, announced to the world that a new version** of his memorable football game would be arriving on PlayStation 4 and PS Vita sometime in 2016. Coming in at number 114 of our top 150 games this month, *Kick Off 2* clearly has a pedigree and is held in high regard by many of **Retro Gamer** readers. Less than one month later, Jon Hare, creator of fellow sports classic *Sensible Soccer* revealed his plan to reinvent the game with *Sociable Soccer*. Two retro-inspired games within a month – but is there the market for them, and why now?

"I've been planning this game for about seven years," Jon told us, "and in September this year I met the Combo Breaker team from Finland and realised they had what it takes to help bring it to life." For *Kick Off* creator Dino Dini, the genesis of his new game dates back even further. "I have been waiting for the opportunity to continue what I started for about 20 years," he states, "and it came about, quite simply, because a company that has money and the ability to support the game offered to fund it for me. It's been there all these years for anybody that wanted to do that." According to Dino's initial announcement, *Kick Off Revival* was born when Shahid Ahmad, director of strategic content at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe became interested in the *Kick Off* story and sent its creator a PS Vita development kit. After working on a prototype in his spare time, Dino has now quit his day job and is fully embroiled with the game. "And now we have a budget, we've got a small team of contractors, a couple of artists and someone helping me with the programming," he adds.

With original publisher Anco long gone, Dino is free to work using his game's original name. Jon Hare is not quite so lucky, not that the Sensible Software founder sees it that way. "It's actually very nice to work on a new IP," he notes, "and I think personally a new football game, that is more than just a retro gimmick, needs to be a new IP in order to be taken seriously by mainstream consumers." So what do




» *Kick Off Revival* looks to continue its classic gameplay with modern graphics.



» Dino Dini no doubt explaining a new trick at the recent *Kick Off 2* World Cup 2015.

the new updates offer gamers today? Says Jon of *Sociable Soccer*, "It will have the same fast gameplay and ability to play the game with exactly the same controls and cameras [as *Sensible Soccer*], although other control set ups and cameras will also be made available. It will have the usual hordes of club and national teams, as well as the silly custom teams like Cheeseboard and Old Dear's Menu." Jon also confirms that the ability to design your own cups and leagues will be present, with the addition of an online multiplayer league, where players will be able to represent their own club, country or clan against fans of opposing teams. It's also clear that *Sociable Soccer* will have that same wacky sense of humour that ran through the original game. "Absolutely," declares Jon, "as we do not intend to take on *FIFA* or *PES* at their own game. They both plump for realistic players and a professional sports TV-style presentation. Our game will be full of the world of football, but presented in a much ore light-hearted way and with heaps of customisable content."

So what can we expect from *Kick Off Revival*? "The important things will not change," says Dino firmly. "The ball will not stick to your feet; you can shoot any way you want and aiming and swerving the ball will be totally under the player's control." The game will be in 3D, or at least a version of it as, according to Dino, 'it's actually easier to make games like that these days.' He admits, however, that he was stung by criticism that this would make it more like the football games of today. "It's like people want to jump on bandwagons. When I announced it was going to be in 3D people said 'oh it's going to be like *FIFA* then'. But it doesn't mean that at all. Just because it's technically 3D doesn't mean it will be like the modern games. We can still have an overhead camera, but one of the advantages is that you can get 3D replays, with different camera angles. I see it as a positive move."

Unlike *Kick Off Revival*, which is chiefly pre-financed, *Sociable Soccer* started life as a Kickstarter project, with the initial target £300,000. However, after a slow start, the campaign was ended by Jon on the 25th November, although development continues amidst interest from several publishers and the designer remains confident the game will go ahead as planned. And while the two legendary names are technically at odds with each other for the first time in many years, both appreciate the efforts of the other. Jon says, "I think it's great Dino has a new version of *Kick Off*. I would imagine what both games will have in common is that they will put playability before the demands of an animation system, get an initial boost from people who have played the older titles, before gaining a substantial number of new, younger players too." Dino is slightly more guarded in his take on *Sociable Soccer*. "This is the first time in 20 years that I have had creative control over a videogame, so that's what I'm doing and concentrating on. If others decide now is the time for them as well, then let them. Retro gaming is very popular now, partly because of nostalgia and partly because there's stuff in these old games that we do not see now. The industry chopped off indie gaming a long time ago and now I think there's the time and opportunity to bring it back. So I'm actually feeling quite confident that we can do something to repair the damage."*

## READER'S COMMENTS

■ "Neither is on a format I own, but I was always more of a *Sensi* fan, so that would be the one I'd back if it was ported to the Wii U." **THE_HAWK**

■ "I loved *Sensible World Of Soccer* so really looking forward to *Sociable Soccer*." **SKODATHEGREAT**

■ "I don't think *Sensi* or *KO2* could be improved, especially considering all the fan mods. I'd love to see a reboot of a footie arcade game like Football Champ." **PARANOIDMARVIN**

■ "I'm a huge *Sensible Soccer* fan, and am cautiously excited about *Sociable Soccer*. Part of me says it won't reach its funding target which will be a massive shame; gaming now is about realism whereas Sensible's output was about having a laugh." **FLATAPEX**

■ "I've given up on modern gaming, so unless there's a Mega Drive version coming out, then I'm a 'don't care'." **DAVID**

■ "The more I've heard about *Sociable Soccer* the less inclined I've been to back it, and I'm a MASSIVE *SWOS* fan. Just seems to have got hung up on the 'clan' idea more than the core game. *Kick Off* just seems more pure and that appeals to me more." **TREGUARD**

■ "People should stop messing around and get *Virtua Soccer 4* up and running on my PC." **NCF1**




» [PC] The action in *Sociable Soccer* will be just as frantic as its forebear.



» [PC] There will be a plethora of options for gamers with *Sociable Soccer*.

## ARCADE CLASSICS




### DON'T MISS OUR BRAND NEW BOOK

■ If you ever pushed a ten-pence piece into *Pac-Man* or teared through a check point in *Out Run*, you'll adore our brand new bookazine. After numerous requests, we've decided to release **Arcade Classics**, a huge 180-page book dedicated to the arcade scene of yester year. We've trawled through ten years of content to deliver classic articles covering all your favourite games.

**Arcade Classics** features the evolution of *Street Fighter*, the legacy of *Robotron* and *Dragon's Lair*, the making of *Out Run*, *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man* and much, much more. The Seventies, Eighties and early-Nineties were an incredibly important time and helped shape the industry that we know today. This awesome book is an awesome insight into that incredible period and is a tome that no self-respecting arcade lover should be without. **Arcade Classics** is available now priced £9.99 from retailers and **www.imagineshop.co.uk**.



# Collector's corner



## JEWEL IN THE CROWN

### THAT PIECE YOU CAN'T BE WITHOUT

**KIZUNA ENCOUNTER**

■ This was a dream game for me back to 2001. Luckily I met somebody with financial problems who sold me the game for a reasonable price. Sometimes I think to sell it and just stay with the PS2 version, which comes with *Savage Reign* as well and few extras. **PAID: $496**

**MUSHA**

I was crazy for this game and remember when my friend Carlitos showed up at my house with it! I use to run stereo cable out from the jack port to my stereo and it sounded crazy.

**PAID: $84**

**CRUSADER OF CENTY**

I didn't like it before due to the [other RPG games in the] SNES library, but in 2008 I decided to give it a second chance via an emulator and I really enjoyed it. That's when I decide to track the game to buy it.

**PAID: $85**

**DUCKTALES 2**

"I used to watch the cartoon every morning before school. The NES game was amazing with a perfect soundtrack. *DuckTales 2*, is not bad at all, it just came out at the wrong time. The high price today is due to it being such a late NES release (1993)."

**PAID: $62**

# Collector's corner

## Readers take us through the retro keyhole



## BIO

**NAME:** Menfis Mancebo-Hidalgo

**ESTIMATED VALUE:** $134,000

**FAVOURITE CONSOLES:** NES and Genesis

**FAVOURITE GAME:** *Final Fantasy VII*

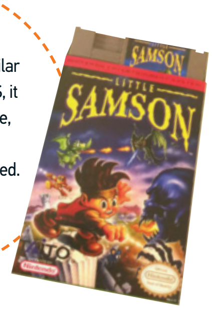
**Our latest collector is from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and has now started on his second** games collection after becoming an investor in *Pier Solar.* Menfis received a love of games at an early age, thanks to the generosity of his parents, Tatin Mancebo and Virgilia Hidalgo. "I was lucky to have a father who would buy me games whenever I wanted them. Due to that reason I was always dealing with four to five different videogame system at the same time."

As a result Menfis already had quite an impressive array of games when he first started collecting games seriously in 2001. "I already had around six different system with games were with me from the past," he tells us. Disaster struck, however, in 2003 when he lost his entire games collection. It proved to be quite traumatic for Menfis and he completely turned his back on retro gaming. "It was such a sad moment," he remembers, "and I stopped dealing with retro games until 2007."

But Menfis returned with a vengeance, making up for lost time and spending an impressive amount of cash in the process. "I have only been buying games for eight years, but right now I have more than $134,000 of investment." His collection is pricey as Menfis only collects fully complete games. "I don't feel comfortable with loose cartridges or systems," he tells us, "I would rather pay two to four times the price with a box and manual". He also plans to use his games to tackle the online retro games community. "I'm planning to create a retro games YouTube Channel for people who speak Spanish somewhere in 2016 with my best friend, Antonio Santana."

Menfis's collection is a little on the large side, so we were keen to know how his wife felt about his hobby. "My wife is not a gamer and she doesn't really care for the hobby at all," he admits." He doesn't seem to mind, however, and is happy focusing on collecting more games for the Mega Drive and NES, his favourite systems. "The NES was my second system and my first love," Menfis tell us. "I first owned a ColecoVision back to 1986. I asked for a NES and my father buy me a Coleco by mistake. Despite it being my first console I still don't feel any love for it at all. *

**LITTLE SAMSON**



It's a great game, but, similar to *DuckTales 2* on the NES, it came out at the wrong time, meaning it didn't get the interest it should have received.

**PAID: $314**


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# BACK TO THE NINETIES




# THE LATEST NEWS FROM JANUARY 1999

**JANUARY 1999 – Super Smash Bros. arrives, we get lost in Silent Hill, Konami brings a revolution Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition lacks any, SimCity 3000 has great foundations while Irritating Stick is exactly what it says it is. Richard Burton sticks it out…**




**The new year started well for Nintendo with news that its Nintendo 64 console had reportedly sold a** million units in the UK. An impressive feat considering Sony's supposedly all-conquering PlayStation took longer to reach that milestone. Maybe there was life in Nintendo yet…

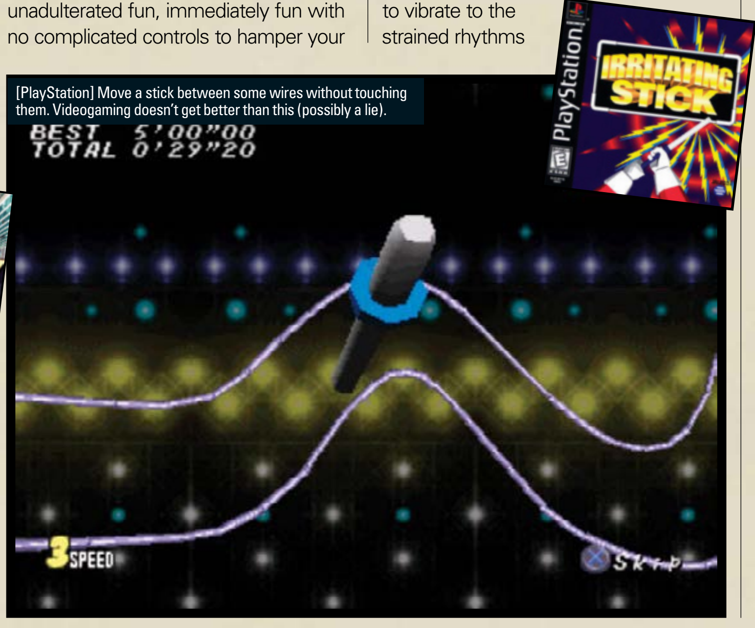
New for the N64 was *Super Smash Bros.* which saw a selection of Nintendo's most beloved characters doing battle on intricately-built platform stages. The premise was an odd one: bash your opponent about to build their damage percentage up and make them easier to knock off the stage into their doom. Falling off a platform doesn't necessarily mean death, though, as you can recover thanks to double jumps and special moves. There are eight characters to choose from including fan favourites such as Fox (*Star Fox*), Link (*Zelda*), Mario (*Super Mario*), Samus (*Metroid*) and Pikachu (*Pokémon*) and also four other locked characters.

*Super Smash Bros.* was pure unadulterated fun, immediately fun with no complicated controls to hamper your gaming and a superb soundtrack really topped off things nicely.

The first game in the survival horror franchise *Silent Hill* was released in the USA by Konami. You play Harry Mason, who sets out to find his adopted daughter in the spooky fog-bound town of *Silent Hill* amongst its horrific and cultish residents.

Using a third-person perspective *Silent Hill* took the emphasis away from blood and gore but hammered home the psychological horror element by drenching you in the heavy foreboding atmosphere of a town that just doesn't feel right. You will jump at sounds, shadowy movements and, in fact, just about anything once the game gets inside your head.

Keeping the display uncluttered and opting for a small selectable menu to check on the finer points of your character's condition was unobtrusive and inspired as was using the DualShock controller as an indicator of your health. Once Harry's health becomes critical the controller begins to vibrate to the strained rhythms




[PlayStation] Move a stick between some wires without touching them. Videogaming doesn't get better than this (possibly a lie).






[PC] Contrary to popular belief and whatever Starship might say, this city wasn't built with either rock or roll.

## NEWS JANUARY 1999

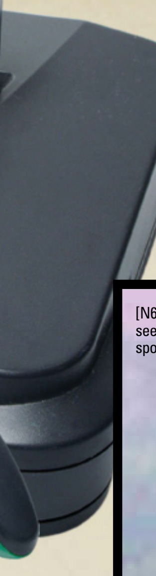
3 January saw NASA launches its robotic landing spacecraft, the Mars Polar Lander. It was intended to take samples from Mars' South Pole. However, on 3 December the spacecraft failed to re-establish contact with NASA after its descent through Mars' atmosphere and it was concluded that it had failed to land and had smashed into the surface of the planet at high speed.

31 January saw the debut of animated comedy sitcom *Family Guy* on US television. It introduced us to the Griffins; Peter and Lois and their kids Stewie, Meg and Chris along with their talking pet dog, Brian.

The third series aired in 2002 and was cancelled by the television network. Reruns and exceptionally good DVD sales persuaded the network to reinstate *Family Guy* with series four airing mid-2005 in what turned out to be a wise and lucrative U-turn.

Another television series airing for the first time in January was the HBO series, *The Sopranos*. The crime drama focused on mobster Tony Soprano, played by the late James Gandolfini, and how he managed his brutal work and family life. It ended six series and 86 episodes later becoming a multi-award winning series.

The first album releases of a new year saw an eclectic mix of musical tastes being catered for. Among the albums released in January were: *Baby One More Time* (Britney Spears), *In Your Area* (Hawkwind), *By Your Side* (The Black Crowes), *Inside Out EP* (Anthrax), *Dreaming Neon Black* (Nevermore) and *Chyna Doll* (Foxy Brown).





[N64] Where else what you get to see Link take on *Donkey Kong* in a spot of fisticuffs?

# CHARTS

## JANUARY 1999

### PLAYSTATION




1. Tenchu (Activision)
2. Apocalypse (Activision)
3. Formula One 98 (Psygnosis)
4. Michael Owen's WLS 99 (Eidos)
5. Tekken 3 (Sony)

### NINTENDO 64




1. F-Zero X (Nintendo)
2. 1080° Snowboarding (Nintendo)
3. F1 World Grand Prix (Video System Co.)
4. Mission: Impossible (Infogrames)
5. WWF Warzone (Acclaim)

### PC



1. Age Of Empires: Gold Edition (Microsoft)
2. Lula: Virtual Babe (Take 2)
3. Virtual Springfield (Fox Interactive)
4. SiN (Activision)
5. Combat Flight Simulator (Microsoft)

### MUSIC



1. Heart Beat/Tragedy (Steps)
2. Praise You (Fat Boy Slim)
3. Pretty Fly (For A White Guy) (Offspring)
4. When You're Gone (Bryan Adams Ft. Melanie C)
5. A Little Bit More (911)

[Arcade] *DDR* made ordinary non-rhythmic buffoons move like John Travolta.






[Arcade] A 3D *Fatal Fury* sounds just the ticket. Sadly that ticket's expired due to the game being mediocre.

of his heart beat. It was a lovely touch adding yet more hair-raising ambience to the game.

To compliment the daunting visuals was the incredibly moody and distinctive soundtrack composed by Akira Yamaoka. The final result was one of the scariest games to be released on any console and a pivotal moment in the evolution of survival horror gaming.

The new gaming trend in arcade land appeared to be rhythm action dance games and Konami was not slow in following up its *Dance Dance Revolution* hit released just two months ago with a sequel entitled *Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix*.

The dancing or, for those with a lack of rhythm and coordination, stomping about game, would see you trying to step on pressure pads on the floor in rhythmic time to the arrows indicated on-screen as your chosen track plays. *2nd Mix* repeated ten songs from the original but also had 26 brand-new tunes. It was undeniably addictive and playable with *Dance Dance Revolution* appearing regularly in arcades with its many frequent updated cabinets.

SNK unveiled its latest offering in the *Fatal Fury* series. *Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* was a 3D fighting game using the Hyper Neo-Geo 64 hardware, the successor to SNK's tried and trusted Neo-Geo MVS arcade system. The Hyper Neo-Geo 64 was also the first piece of SNK hardware able to render graphics in 3D. Unfortunately, *Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* was one of only seven games released before the hardware was prematurely discontinued.

*Wild Ambition* retraced the story of the original *Fatal Fury* reintroducing us to characters of old. While the intention was good, the gameplay was awful. Although several new features were added, the graphics were just crap

[PlayStation] Welcome to *Silent Hill*. Prepare to be have your nerves shredded… and whatever you do, don't go down those stairs…






with the game having the feel of being cobbled together in a rush.

Published by Electronic Arts and developed by Maxis was the latest instalment of *SimCity* entitled *SimCity 3000* for PC and Mac. The new version featured many additional features over the previous incarnation such as farming and agriculture, waste management, facilities such as power plants having finite life spans and requiring constant attention. You would also have to make lucrative business contacts with neighbouring cities ensuring your coffers are kept filled and your brain remained in a permanent state of multi-tasking frazzlement.

The graphics and sound were overhauled making for a game very pleasing to the eye yet engrossing and with longevity measured only in how far your imagination could take you. *SimCity 3000* was a critical and financial hit selling well over 5 million units and deservedly so.

The whiffiest pile of videogame crudness this month fell squarely into the lap of the atrocious *Irritating Stick* for the PlayStation. Based on a Japanese TV show you must manoeuvre your stick along the maze without touching the edges and setting off an alarm. It was similar to the old family board game *Buzz Off* but without the fun.

*Irritating Stick* had no redeeming features; graphically bland with gameplay that was aggravating and tedious making the likes of *E.T.* on the Atari 2600 play like *Ocarina Of Time*. Thankfully the European release fell through after the publisher Jaleco realised what a freshly produced steaming turd of a game it really was. In fact, someone poking a real stick in your face would've been more fun and less irritating. *

# THIS MONTH IN…

## COMPUTER & VIDEOGAMES

*C&VG* had news of two videogame related films – one released and one in production. Newly- released was *Tekken* an anime film which the team loved. In truth, it was awful. *C&VG* was also raving about the *Final Fantasy* film due out in 2001. Yeah that wasn't great, either.




## GAMEPRO

The multiformat mag had news regarding developers getting onboard for the recently released Sega Dreamcast. While the usual suspects cropped up, so did Namco which until recently, was adamant it wouldn't develop for Sega after siding with Sony. Good news for Sega and for Namco's bank balance too…




## AMIGA INFORMER

Masquerading as a fanzine, *Amiga Informer* was an informative read from Eldritch Enterprises. Sadly the January issue was to be the last with it merging with *Amazing Computing/ Amiga*, a rival magazine. Launched in April 1996, *Amiga Informer* became the respected go to magazine for US Amiga owners.



# YOUR 150 GREATES
# GAMES EV






# Our celebrations for issue 150 kick off with the greatest games of all time. How many of the following featured in the top ten you sent in?

**A lot has happened in the last ten years of Retro Gamer's life and while we've done many different list features, we've never created a definitive list of truly essential games. Of course, readers who have been** with **Retro Gamer** since its inception will realise that a reader list first appeared in issue 8 – a staggering 142 issues ago now. That's over 11 years ago, which is a ridiculous amount of time in the games industry. When your original list appeared, the Xbox, PS2 and GameCube were all current-generation systems, now they're two generations old, with many of our readers considering them retro machines too.

Earlier in the year we asked you what the greatest games of all time were. In fact, we asked you over several months and the results were rather overwhelming. We had thousands of votes, covering all sorts of games, from *Pong* to newer releases like *Grand Theft Auto V* and *Dark Souls*, and we decided to create the ultimate list. The original list in 2004 had readers voting for over 700 individual games across over 30 different formats. This time around that impressive record was smashed with over 1400 games being voted for. Keeping with the stats, 61 games from the original list remain too, so we've shown you their previous positions so you can see how far they've climbed and dropped. And remember, this is your list, made possible by your many, many votes. It's interesting to see how tastes have changed over the last decade.




Do these classics make your final list? Read the feature in order to find out

150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

## 150 Double Dragon

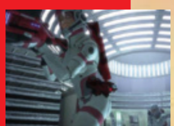
■ Year: 1987 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: 88 ▼



It's been usurped by rivals like *Streets Of Rage* but older readers will forever remember that finale where the Lee brothers turn on each another...

## 149 Mass Effect

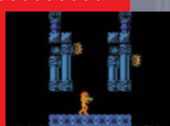
■ Year: 2007 ■ Platform: Xbox 360
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



BioWare is synonymous with quality, and games like this are why. Having done a great job with *KOTOR* the team proved it can make its own brilliant universe.

## 148 Metroid

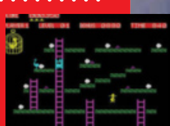
■ Year: 1986 ■ Platform: NES
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



While it saddens us to see Samus' excellent debut so low on this list, it's fair to say that numerous sequels have improved upon the *Metroid* formula.

## 147 Chuckie Egg

■ Year: 1983 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 28 ▼



Another trailblazer in the platforming field. Older readers may have fond memories of this being playable on the BBC Micros frequently found in schools at the time of release.

## 146 Ridge Racer

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Being able to recreate 3D arcade games of the time was a major selling point for the PlayStation, with this title showcasing this key feature from the very start.

## 145 OutRun 2006 Coast 2 Coast

■ Year: 2006 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Having bottled lightning by recapturing the greatness of the original with the 2003 arcade sequel, Sega took things even further for the console port.

# ÉRIC CHAHI RE-ENTERS ANOTHER WORLD

## 144 Another World

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



**How does it feel knowing *Another World* has made our top 150 games?**
That is an honour! Thanks a lot. That is very nice.

**What were you aiming to do when you set out to make *Another World*?**
I was aiming to create a game with movie rhythm and huge animation on the screen. It was clear that I could achieve this by using 2D polygons. But at first I had no idea what the game would be and if technically it would work. The universe and the scenario came later, while I was coding the engine and then creating the content.

**What was the hardest thing to achieve from a technical point of view?**
Surprisingly the process of creating the tools and the engine was very fluid. I took advantage of the concepts that I had learned from my previous game. I had the fortune that GFA basic can communicate with assembly code. The hard task was to create graphics and animation with polygon shapes and create an aesthetic with it.

**Why do you think that your game continue to resonate with gamers?**
I don't know. Maybe partly because today the audience is much more open to diversified content than 15 years ago? Blocky games are not criticised, for example. I think it is more in relation with the immersive aspect of the game where there is a lot of room for the player's imagination.

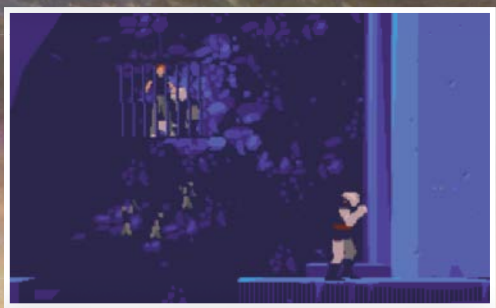
**So what's your absolute favourite sequence from *Another World*?**
The introduction, from a cinematic point of view. In the game I particularly love the jail sequence when Lester meets the alien friend, the starting point of their friendship, all those little twists that happen to them. And from a pure rhythmic point of view, the sequence when Lester is escaping from laser blasts in a corridor in the citadel.

**Right, to finish up: what can you tell us about your recent Kickstarter book?**
It is a book about my career. It covers all my creations from 1983 to today. It is more like a story following my journey from the start of personal computing in France on machines like the Oric-1 or ZX81, and the rise of publishers at a local level. A lot of twists happened in my career. It is quite well-narrated and it includes lots of design documents. The book also includes new content covering my latest project; a highly interactive volcano simulation, as well as some thoughts about VR, which will be the basis of my next game.

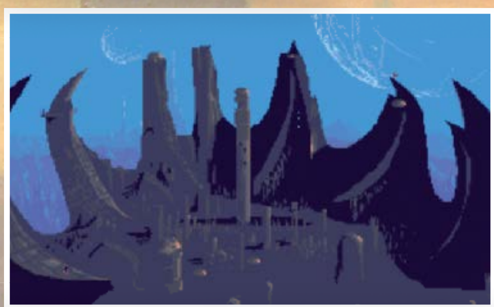
> **"I was aiming to create a game with movie rhythm and huge animaition"**
> Éric Chahi



» [Amiga] The cinematic cutscenes were a huge part of *Another World*'s appeal, making you feel like you were involved in a movie.



» [Amiga] There are no words in *Another World*, but the adventure and friendship between the two characters is effortlessly conveyed.



» [Amiga] The design of *Another World* is nothing short of tremendous, with lots of gorgeous-looking environments to explore.



# YOUR FAVOURITE DUNGEONEER

## 143 Gauntlet

■ Year: 1985 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: New Entry

### MERLIN (WIZARD)

■ Having a magic attack that can effectively nuke a screen of enemies and generators is supremely powerful, and his basic shots are only just weaker than the best in the game. Fragile he may be, but Merlin is amazing at range.

### THOR (WARRIOR)

■ While powerful, Thor can be caught up by his peers in just a few levels. In addition, his large projectiles lack the ability to fit through small gaps and his magic is weak. In a group, his naturally higher defense is useful for tanking.

### THYRA (VALKYRIE)

■ Thor's counterpart shares similar traits – namely defensive aptitude – but her shot allows her to snipe where he can't. Still not the best choice, considering the other options .

### QUESTOR (ELF)

■ Arguably the best solo character, the speedy little Elf is also great in a group – his magic power is close to Merlin's, while his sheer speed allows him to kite groups of enemies while allies pick them off safely. In a game with so many enemies, agility is crucial.




# THE JRPG WITH STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

## 142 Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 4

■ Year: 2008 ■ Platform: PS2 ■ Previous position: New Entry

Many will argue that *Final Fantasy* lost its way after its PSone triple whammy of excellence, and there's been a warm throne waiting for a new JRPG king ever since. There's a case to be made for Atlus' series taking the crown – with gruelling traditional turn-based encounters, interesting interpersonal elements and a stunning sense of style, *Persona* is certainly a deserving heir.



# WHY TREASURE'S DEBUT AMAZED

## 141 Gunstar Heroes

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Mega Drive ■ Previous position: 50 ▼



*Gunstar Heroes* nearly missed this list, but made it in as Treasure's sole representation thanks to a few late votes!

### SCALING

■ Find this gelatinous enemy in Black's Dice Maze and you will be treated to a sprite being warped in ways that the Mega Drive just wasn't designed for. We're still mystified by it today.

### ROTATION

■ Fighting Orange on an aircraft is one thing, but fighting him as the aircraft and background rotate independently of one another? Witchcraft! Those Treasure lads are videogame sorcerers.

### MULTI-JOINTED ENEMIES

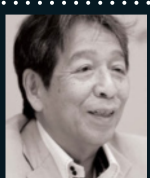
■ *Gunstar Heroes* has a few enormous creations, but nothing sticks out more than Seven Force – the screen-filling, multi-sprite boss that's as deadly as it is mesmerising.



# TOMOHIRO NISHIKAIDO ON HIS ARCADE CLASSIC

## 140 Space Invaders

■ Year: 1978 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 6 ▼

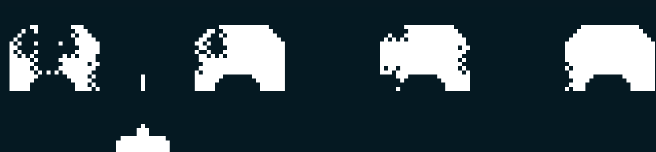


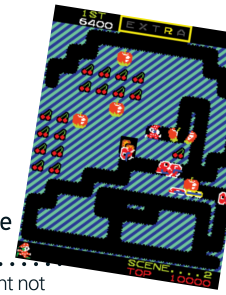
**How did you get into the videogames industry?**
After graduating from university I worked at an audio-related company. I left after a year and just as I was looking for a new employer, I had a chance meeting with a former colleague from the audio company. He was already working at Taito and recommended it to me as well. I wasn't so much looking to become a game designer as I was hoping to make the most of my electronics skills."

**How did you develop an arcade game in those early days?**
I analysed *Pong* and set about making new, original videogames. I designed ten, including *Speed Race* and *Western Gun*. These were logic IC-based designs. I developed these games almost completely by myself.

**We now know that *Space Invaders* was a huge hit. Did Taito foresee its success?**
Unlike the development department, the upper echelons of the sales department were sceptical. They told me that the game needed a lot of work to be a hit. We held shows for members of the arcade industry, and their reaction wasn't very favourable either.

**What made the game so appealing?**
While it wasn't the first shooting game, most to that point had the player shooting down passive targets to rack up points. *Space Invaders* had the enemies shoot back; I think that was exciting to the youthful audience. The sales staff and arcade operators felt the Invaders' attacks made the game too difficult, but they were also a lot older than the players. I also think that the feeling of exhilaration that comes with wiping out a screen full of targets was important to the game's success."





## 139 Mr Do!

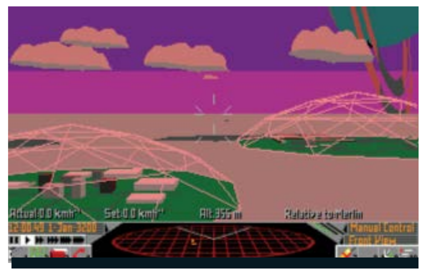
■ Year: 1982 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: 82 ▼

Universal's classic arcade title might not have *Dig Dug*'s fame, but that hardly matters when the game is this good – more elaborate mechanics and a variety of ways to win ensure that *Mr Do!* makes a clown of the competition.

## 138 Frontier: Elite II

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 20 ▼

The first sequel to *Elite* was a little bit buggy, but it was also the kind of game that the right player could easily fall in love with, thanks to its enormous procedurally-generated universe and advanced flight physics model.



## 137 Super Mario 3D World

■ Year: 2013 ■ Platform: Wii U
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

This classic followed the approach of *Super Mario 3D Land*, mixing gameplay elements from *Super Mario Bros. 3*, bite-size 3D exploration in the vein of *Super Mario 64*, and all topped off with *Super Mario Galaxy*'s glossy sheen and a magical soundtrack composed by Mahito Yokota, Toru Minegishi, Yasuaki Iwata and Koji Kondo. It also added in great strategic sections featuring Captain Toad and four-player co-op. Although it didn't reinvent the concept, it's still a brilliantly fun and well-polished *Mario* platformer that we always return to.



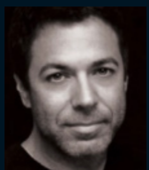



» [PC] *Duke Nukem 3D* had some odd enemies, like this Pig Cop, for example.

# SCOTT MILLER HAILS THE DUKE

## 136 Duke Nukem 3D

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ★



**What are your impressions of the game today?**
More than any game associated with 3D Realms, *Duke Nukem 3D* is the one that best defined us as a game studio: cutting-edge gameplay, a push for stronger stories and characters, humor, attention to detail and interactivity, and a sense of place and progression within the levels. *Duke 3D* had it all. *Max Payne* did, too, but *Duke* was the first, the leader, the true pioneer. With *Duke 3D* we feel like we took the shooter genre down a new road where character and story progression matters. We wanted to set new standards with *Duke Nukem Forever* and in the end that was our downfall, because we couldn't keep up with the industry's growth and still stay a relatively small independent studio. It's a shame we weren't able to continue the *Duke* legacy and had to hand it over to another studio. Hopefully Gearbox can overcome *Duke Nukem Forever* and bring back Duke as strong as we remember him from his glory days in the Nineties.

**Did you foresee *Duke Nukem 3D* becoming a classic?**
We didn't have any idea that *Duke 3D* would become a classic. Back in the Nineties a game would have a lifetime of about one year at best. Our only goal was to make a fun game that had its share of innovations. Amazingly, to this day *Duke 3D* still makes a lot of money on Steam and Xbox Live. I simply can't explain the longevity!

**What do you think of Duke's current popularity and his future?**
We've had some amazing new franchises come along, and several cool characters, like Nathan Drake, who've replaced Duke by having a lot more depth. That isn't to say Duke cannot be revived, but he no longer has the clear advantages as a cool character he once had. I think he's going to be very hard to resurrect because he's only ever been one-dimensional. But Lara Croft was in the same kind of boat and she has survived a decade-long slump with two recent good games, so anything is possible."




» [PC] *Duke Nukem 3D* made you feel badass, even creatures like this were cannon fodder.

## 135 The Lords of Midnight

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 53

This classic from Mike Signleton pushed the graphical boundaries of the system whilst allowing for multiple player strategies.



## 134 Tempest 2000

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: Jaguar
■ Previous position: New Entry

This remake of the arcade classic is drenched in Jeff Minter's usual approach. A fast, frantic shoot-em-up that surpasses the original.




## 133 Daytona USA

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: New Entry ★

This sublime Sega racer is made of sheer joy, with a joyous song and stunning visuals. And the arcade version with hydraulic seats remains an the best.



## 132 Jet Set Radio

■ Year: 2000 ■ Platform: Dreamcast
■ Previous position: New Entry ★

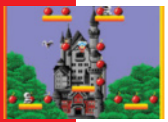
With cartoony characters and a J-Rock/hip-hop soundtrack, *Jet Set Radio* is a true classic with truckloads of charm. It's now available in HD too!



## 131 Bomb Jack

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: New Entry ★

This charming and oft-forgotten arcade platformer mixed jumping, gliding and famous landmarks as backdrops in a quest to defuse bombs.



## 130 Tekken 3

■ Year: 1997 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: New Entry ★

Namco's third *Tekken* remains a favourite by expanding every aspect of the game, rounding off a trilogy of fantastic fighting titles for the PlayStation. You win, Namco!



150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

## DANIEL SUSSMAN
### (PROJECT DIRECTOR, ROCK BAND 3)



**How does it feel knowing *Rock Band 3* is the only rhythm action game in our top 150?**
It feels great to be recognised. We're incredibly proud of all the games in the *Rock Band* franchise, including *Rock Band 3*. It was an enormous effort and we were able to apply a lot of our experience directly to *Rock Band 4*.

**Why do you think *Rock Band 3* has proven to be so popular with our readers?**
*Rock Band 3* was the biggest of all the *Rock Band* titles and included a lot of features that I believe appealed to the hardcore *Rock Band* fan, for example, the goals-oriented campaign.

**Why do you think the *Rock Band* series has been so successful in general?**
I think that all of the *Rock Band* games do an absolutely great job of putting *you* on stage and giving you that rush of a live band performance. We're delivering on a fantasy that lots of people have, who doesn't want to be a rock star?

**Why did you add the keyboard to *Rock Band 3*?**
From a creative standpoint, we thought the keyboard would expand the audience and invite a new group of music lovers to join the band.

**And why did you add the Pro modes?**
Pro Mode was designed to capitalize on the idea that skills developed in the game could translate to real world skills – that playing *Rock Band* would help you play actual instruments.

# PERFECTING THE ROCK FANTASY

## 129 Rock Band 3

■ Year: 2010 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry

It was a natural evolution, really. Harmonix had already taken rhythm action to the main stage by letting players live out their musical fantasies on small plastic guitars with *Guitar hero*, later adding bass into the mix in *Guitar Hero II*. Enthusiastic fans were already singing along as they rocked out, meaning the only thing left was to add in drums and that's just what *Rock Band* did. Its follow-up made several slight changes and improvements, but it was with *Rock Band 3* that the formula was perfected – by adding more options for group play (from keyboard parts to vocal harmonies) and more advanced options in the form of Pro modes and training suites so complex as to almost be able to pass themselves off as tuition tools for real instruments, Harmonix created a rhythm action party game so complete, so perfect that it couldn't even top the game itself with *Rock Band 4*. While we're sure the recent sequel will grow over time and eventually surpass this classic, for now we're content to fire up the 360, get the band together and thrash our way through vast catalogues of amazing tunes.



*Drew Picks*
**MISERY BUSINESS – PARAMORE**

*Darran Picks*
**FREE BIRD – LYNYRD SKYNYRD**

*Jon Picks*
**I GOT YOU (I FEEL GOOD) – JAMES BROWN**

*Nick Picks*
**THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE – MARILYN MANSON**

### THE SECRET TO GREAT RHYTHM ACTION

- Work with amazing, passionate creative people.
- Focus on the gameplay – *Rock Band* works because there's a really good game at the core of the experience.
- Having a clear player fantasy is really useful.

Daniel Sussman








# 5 WAYS NAMCO INVIGORATED THE 3D FIGHTER

## 128 Soul Calibur

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 75 ▼

1 It introduced the eight-way run, which forces you to think more about positioning when fighting.

2 It moved away from the combo strikes that helped define *Tekken*, which made combat feel more structured.

3 It features more lenient 'forgiving buffering' making it more accessible so newcomers won't feel intimidated.

4 Unlike other fighting games, the Dreamcast version was a significant improvement over the arcade original.

5 The story revolving around the *Soul Edge* is far more entertaining than its peers.

# WHY GX IS THE BEST F-ZERO

## 127 F-Zero GX

■ Year: 2003 ■ Platform: GameCube ■ Previous position: New Entry ✰

**VISUALS**
■ It not only has the best graphics of any *F-Zero* game, but some of the best visuals on the GameCube full stop. Even now, 13 years later it remains an astonishing treat to look at.




**STORY MODE**
■ *GX* is the first game in the series to introduce a story. It's a decent one too, spread across nine distinct chapters and focusing on the iconic Captain Falcon.

**VEHICLE HANDLING**
■ The 30 different vehicles found in the game are greatly enhanced over those of earlier titles, ensuring that no two craft handle similarly to each other.

**HIDDEN SECRET**
■ While many knew that the *F-Zero AX* arcade tracks were included in *GX*, it's only recently been revealed that the entire game is accessible.

# PAUL CUISSET REGAINS HIS MEMORIES

## 126 Flashback

■ Year: 1992 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 65 ▼



**About the cutscenes**
Yeah they were quite difficult to create. We had made a polygon tool for the cutscenes and it was very painful to draw all the scenes frame by frame. It was very long. Of course we had rotoscoping to help us, but it was very time-consuming. I think we wanted to have an experience like a film and it was important to have these cutscenes within the game.



**About using rotoscoping**
We wanted to have something to work on with the animation and we had an experiment with a guy and a camera and we filmed him, and then we tried to draw over the image. We couldn't fully match it, but it was so realistic. There was no question. After that, I knew that we had to use that technique. We'd seen *Prince Of Persia* and also *Another World*, which was at Delphine too, and it was quite a source of inspiration for us.

**The technical difficulties**
We had a lot of animations and a lot of frames because, of course, it's like a cartoon and each frame is a sprite in itself. We had more than 1,000 frames of animation for Conrad himself, and of course the most important thing was the memory. The game was created for the Mega Drive at that time. At that time the cartridge size was only 16 mega-bits. That was the biggest, and we managed to negotiate with Sega to have a 24 mega-bit cartridge.

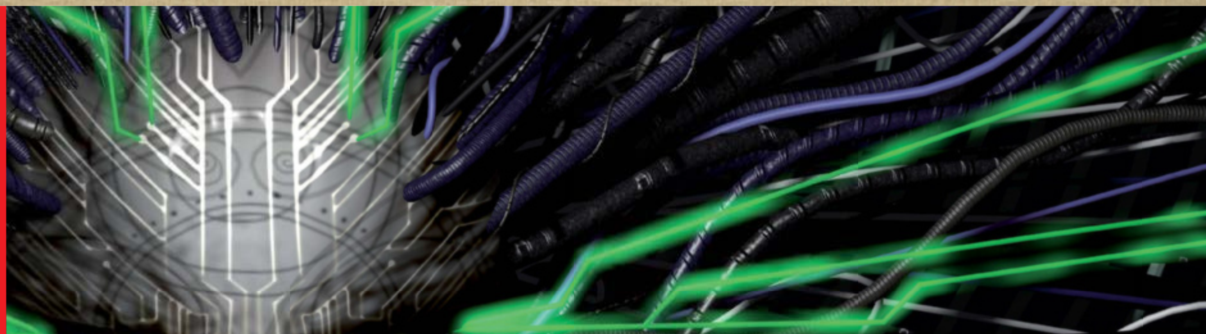
# KONAMI TAKES ON SURVIVAL HORROR

## 125 Silent Hill

■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: PSone
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰

After Capcom's success with *Resident Evil* it was inevitable that others would follow suit. One of the best attempts was Konami's *Silent Hill*, which took the genre in a new direction with a focus on atmosphere and horror that disturbed you rather than made you jump. While Capcom was content to let the player blast zombies with aplomb, Team Silent instead crawled its way into the player's mind, feeding on their fear and delivering psychological scares that were just as effective as a dog jumping through a window.





# JONATHAN CHEY TALKS IMMERSION

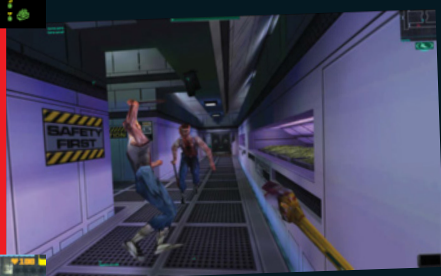
## 119 System Shock 2

■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: PC ■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



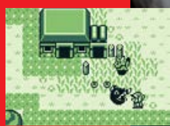
**What do you think it was that has made *System Shock 2* such a fan favourite?**

I think *System Shock 2* is not a very focused game like, say, the original *Doom*, where it's like 'this is a fantastic run-and-gun shooter'. *System Shock 2*, for me, is very much a gestalt, it's a combination of things. It's got a great story, it's got a great character, the audio is fantastic, the stealth components and the AI and the role-playing systems - it's got a lot of stuff in there. But that stuff is kind of randomly thrown in, like I think it all works together to create what I think is a very immersive game. It's a world with a lot of pieces in it, and when you're in it you feel like you're in that world. I think games that are more focused and targeted often feel a little one dimensional; like if you're playing a *COD* game, it's very immersive in one sense in the sense that it's a very beautifully rendered world and there's a lot of crazy things happening, but you kind of know that you're on a path and you can't walk off that path. And if you stop and wait, nothing's going to happen because it's waiting for you to move on to the next part of the game. *System Shock 2* doesn't really stop and wait for you, you feel more like you're in that world you know, the world is coming as well as you coming at it.



## 124 The Legend Of Zelda: Link's Awakening

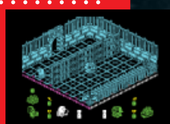
■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Game Boy
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



Nintendo's first handheld *Zelda* title was originally a port of *A Link To The Past* but it grew to become its own adventure, providing that epic grandeur without being limited by the hardware.

## 123 Head Over Heels

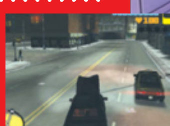
■ Year: 1987 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 35 ▼



For its time the idea of two separately playable characters with unique abilities was extremely novel, and opened up a whole new level of complexity when it came to puzzle solving.

## 122 Grand Theft Auto III

■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: 95 ▼



Though the PSone *GTA* games offered a uniqueness not seen before, it wasn't until *GTA III* that the success of the series skyrocketed. It was the first time an open world felt truly real.

## 121 Civilization II

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



It was *Civilization*'s sequel that really made the series what it is today with an isometric viewpoint, honed mechanics and what would become the defining gameplay for the franchise.

## 120 Cannon Fodder

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 61 ▼

There's a message embedded within *Cannon Fodder* from its title to the grave-strewn loading screen but none of that stopped it from being a lot of fun, even in spite of its incredible difficulty.



# LOUIS CASTLE TAKES CONTROL

## 118 Command & Conquer Red Alert

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: PC ■ Previous position: New Entry ✰

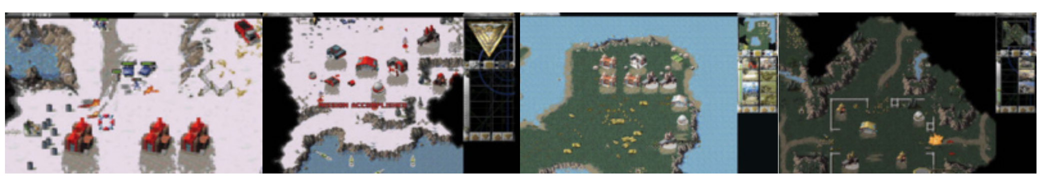


**Why do you think gamers took to *Red Alert* so much, even more so than its predecessor *Command & Conquer*?**

*Red Alert* was more about trying to capture that Fifties B-movie essence, so the characters are over-the-top and the units were a bit weird but based on research, things that people really did pursue. We wanted to echo the tropes at the time, you know big, bulky, heavy. The Russian stuff is going to be stout, be able to take a beating not very pretty at all. Yuri in particular was fun because the Russian side obviously had Tesla for the technology which was awesome, but Yuri with the mind control and stuff that really bent the game, which was really fun. Broke the hell out of stuff, too, but they got it right after many, many, many hours playtesting. It was just too much fun.

**Would you say the camp live action cutscenes helped with that sense of fun?**

When we got to *Red Alert* we had a little bit more money and a lot more flexibility I think creatively, and Joe [Kucan, casting director and Kane actor] could really lean into those characters and the fact that they were kind of campy characters to begin with, and they were supposed to be over-the-top really helped him push the envelope a bit. It was easier to write corny lines for characters when you knew that they were going to be pushed a bit. I think that many times what happens in games or even movies that are campy is in some cases you don't want the people that are making them think that they are making them campy because they tend to go a little too far. I thought that *Red Alert* and *Red Alert 2* struck a nice balance of being very and fun but at the same time took themselves seriously.





» Daniel's collection

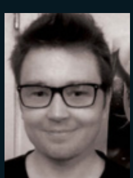




# WHY **FANS LOVE** SEGA'S **CULT GEM**

## 117 NiGHTS into Dreams

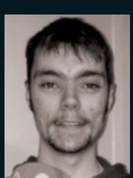
■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: Saturn
■ Previous position: New Entry



**DANIEL HUNT - ADMIN OF NIGHTSINTODREAMS.COM**

**What is it about *NiGHTS* that you like?**
I think the main one is that the game itself is so unique, even nowadays. Even the characters, you don't see that kind of archetypes anymore… or even before. It's just a very unique premise – although games have been done before in dreams so… beautifully! It was all based on Jungian theory, which got me interested on reading about all that sort of stuff.

**Tell us about nightsintrodreams.com.**
Nowadays, it's quieter, but back in the day when the sequel *Journey Of Dreams* came out it was really busy, all the fans were there. You get all kinds of people, from all walks of life, all with *NiGHTS* in common.



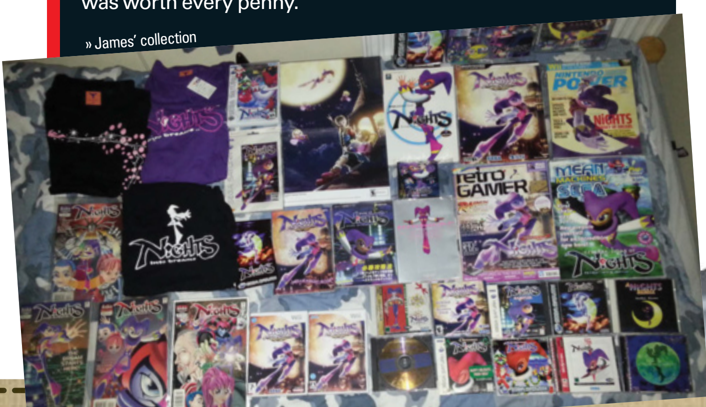
**JAMES LYNE - NIGHTS FAN AND COLLECTOR**

**When did you first play *NiGHTS*?**
Quite recently, actually – it was in August 2013, on the PC. I played *Sonic All-Stars Racing Transformed*, and saw Nights and Reala as playable characters in that, and that got me interested in the game.

**What is it about *NiGHTS* that you like?**
It's completely unlike anything else I've ever played. And how despite being that old, it still looks good when you play it because of how colourful it is.

**What's your favourite piece of *NiGHTS* memorabilia?**
I managed to get a plush of *NiGHTS*. It took me a year and a half to even find one for sale! It cost me a lot of money, but it was worth every penny.

» James' collection



# **CAPCOM'S** SURREAL **MASTERPIECE**

## 116 Strider

■ Year: 1989 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: New Entry

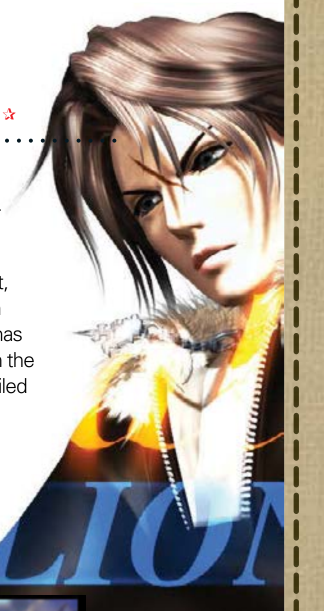
*Strider* may have originated in an obscure anime series, but it's his classic arcade debut that everyone remembers. Kouichi Yotsui was given full control over his coin-op and the result was a delicious meld of oddness that included soviet backdrops, robotic gorillas and elaborate boss fights. It not only boasts one of the arcade's most agile combatants, but also features an insane array of villains and truly imaginative level design. Running across the backs of dinosaurs, flying around gigantic metallic orbs and tearing down exploding mountainsides is all in a day's work for Capcom's dynamic ninja and it's rather telling that neither Capcom or Yotsui himself has never captured *Strider*'s magic in any subsequent sequels.




# WHY **SQUARE'S** SEQUEL TO ITS **PLAYSTATION HIT** ROCKS

## 115 Final Fantasy VIII

■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: PSone ■ Previous position: New Entry



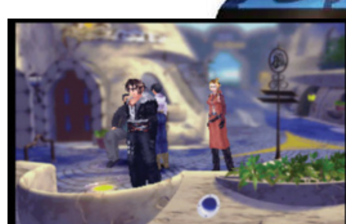
**It's familiar**
Everything you expect from a *Final Fantasy* game is here – summons, chocobos, convoluted stat systems – and the soundtrack is by series stalwart Nobuo Uematsu drives home the feeling of familiarity, despite the new setting and reworked mechanics.

**It's different**
Numbered *Final Fantasy* games traditionally have unique settings. Newcomers to the series expected *VIII* to continue on from *VII*, and doing so would doubtless have made Square money, but true to form *VIII* had to stand on its own.

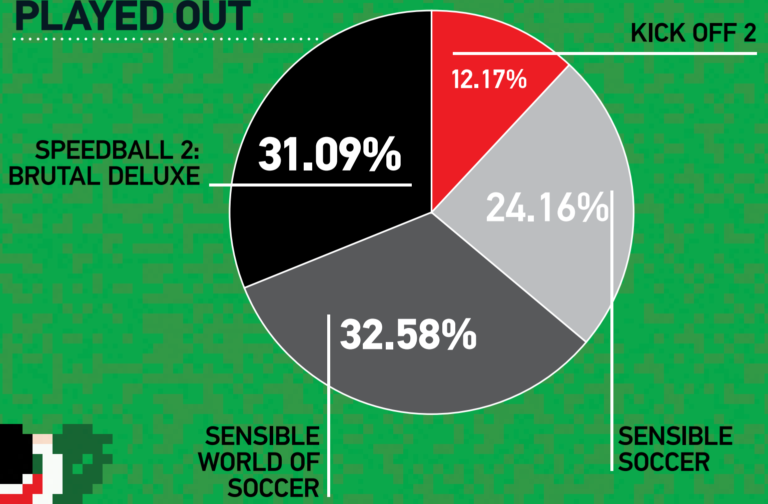
**It has the best mini-game**
Triple Triad is brilliant, a fantastic diversion that gives players a chance to take a break from the main game and is just perfect for winding down after a stressful boss. Just be careful not to lose your Ifrit card.

**It's beautiful**
*Final Fantasy VIII* still looks great, a testament to the visual design skills of Square's artists. It also has some of the best 3D models on the Playstation with amazingly detailed characters for the era.

**It didn't live in *VII*'s Shadow**
*FFVIII* had impossible shoes to fill, but its uniqueness allowed the game to move past the monster that was *FFVII*.



## HOW YOUR SPORTS VOTES PLAYED OUT




# DINO DINI ON HIS BEAUTIFUL GAME

## 114 Kick Off 2

■ Year: 1990 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 54 ▼



**The original *Kick Off* was very successful on the Amiga and Atari ST. Was *Kick Off 2* planned from the start or inspired by this success?**
I didn't know it was going to turn into what it did. If I had known what was going to happen then I probably would have worked differently. But after the initial game's success, of course it made sense to do a sequel. These things evolve. But working as the sole designer on a project, there's only so much you can do, or it makes sense to do, on the first take of a game. So there was plenty to add when it came to doing *Kick Off 2*. But those thoughts were not in my mind while I was doing *Kick Off*.

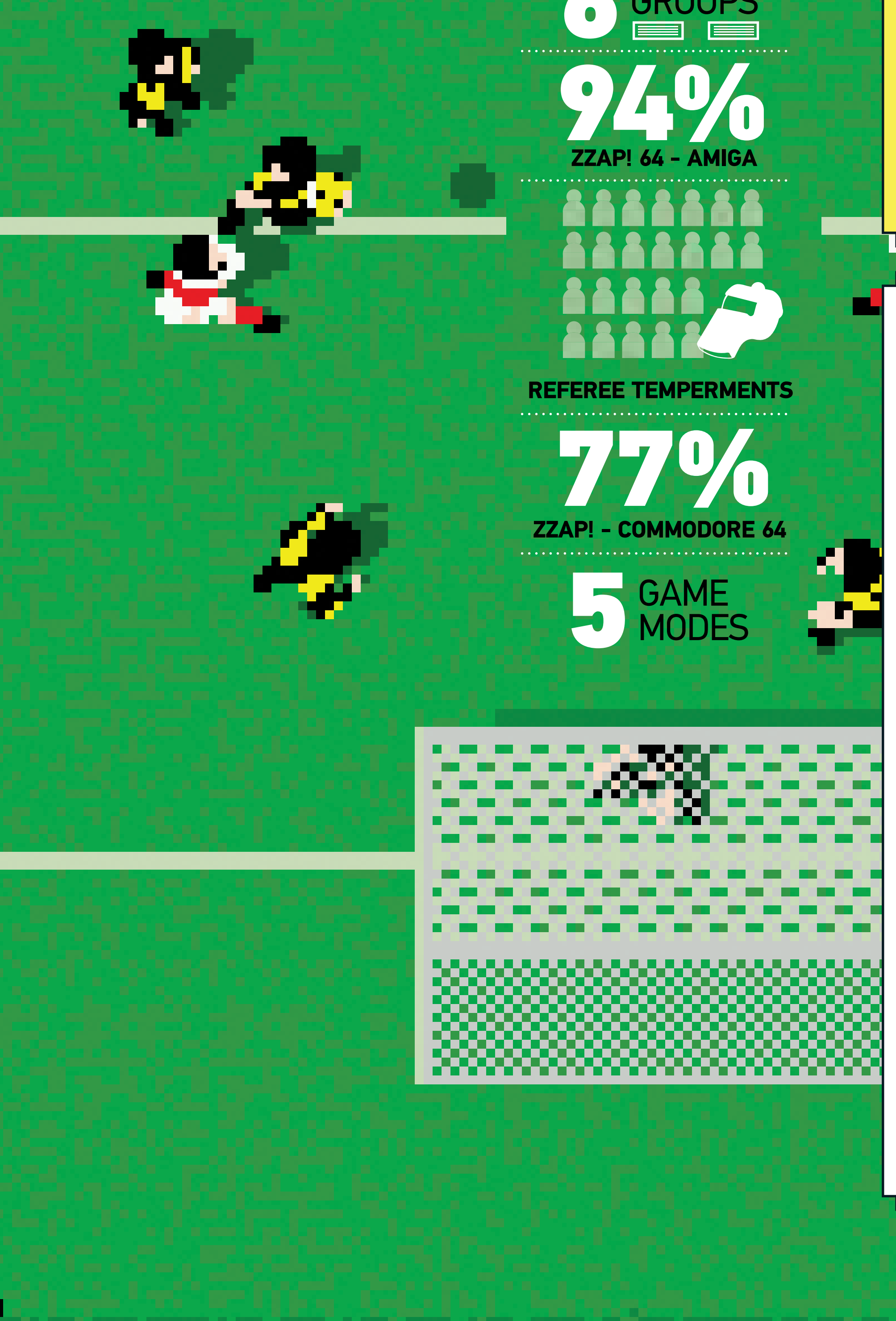
**How did you seek to improve upon the formula of *Kick Off*?**
I don't like to just milk something by dressing it up a little bit. I wanted to add features that added value. The first thing was that there was a lot of feedback about the goalkeepers being too easy, so I made them a lot harder. Also, in the first game, you couldn't aim in more than eight directions because of the joysticks. Fundamentally that was a problem for me as you could only shoot from certain positions on the field. So I had to figure a way of changing that, using an eight-direction joystick. Then one day I realised what I had to do – add a feature where you could bend the shot after you kick it. It may not have been realistic but it was the only way, and the intention wasn't actually to make the ball swerve, but to make you able to shoot in more than eight directions and have more control of the ball. The other thing was action replays and saving to disk – being a skill-based game, I thought it was important to have a way of preserving it. And I included the ability to import players from *Player Manager*, so each individual had attributes such as pace and stamina.

**Do you think you could have made the game better?**
We released some data discs such as *Final Whistle* and they were improvements. I introduced a skill setting for the goalkeeper and a move where you could flick the ball up in the air and do a overhead kick. So I could have put them in *Kick Off 2*, but you've got to see what you've got before you know how to improve it.

**What do you think made *Kick Off 2* such a popular game?**
The main thing with it was that the ball wasn't stuck to your foot. It was tough to play. So you had to train yourself. And there's something intrinsic about that, that if you manage to make yourself better at something, and start to succeed, because you've had to work at it, and therefore enjoy it more. So I made a game where you had the ability to learn a set of skills over a long period of time. And the more you put in, the more reward you got out.

11 D.E.BARKER





## BY THE NUMBERS

**24** COUTRIES AVALIABLE

**6** GROUPS

**94%** ZZAP! 64 - AMIGA

REFEREE TEMPERMENTS

**77%** ZZAP! - COMMODORE 64

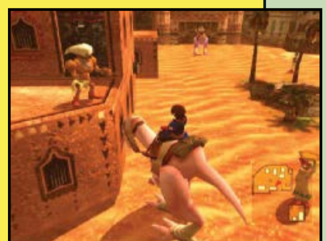
**5** GAME MODES

# SEGA'S FLIGHT OF FANTASY

## 113 Skies Of Arcadia

- Year: 2000 ■ Platform: Dreamcast
- Previous position: New Entry

*Skies Of Arcadia* remains today, if not the best RPG on the Sega Dreamcast, then certainly the best-loved and best-looking. But beyond the beautiful, whimsical and charming graphics lies a deep and original RPG that combines the traditional trappings of the genre with a pirate theme, flying ships and all. Controlling the character of Vyse, a member of a pirate clan called the Blue Rogues, the player is soon embroiled in a physical and political battle with the evil Valuan Empire, whose goal is world domination via a series of crystals. Uniting 3D movement and turn-based combat, *Skies Of Arcadia* is a compelling game complete with imaginative and unique level design.



# JULIAN GOLLOP: STRATEGY KING

## 112 Chaos

- Year: 1985 ■ Platform: ZX Spectrum
- Previous position: 41



**While creating *Chaos*, did you imagine it would have the love it does today?**
No, not at all. I've been asked many times over the years for permission to remake the game. There have been at least 30 fan remakes of the game, and no doubt there were many more attempted.

**What role did *Chaos* play in your future games?**
*Chaos* was the first game I programmed entirely in assembly language, so it gave me the confidence to realise my ideas in the format. Later, after abandoning university, I returned to *Chaos* with *Lords Of Chaos*, an ambitious sequel and my last 8-bit game. *Chaos* also influenced *Magic & Mayhem* from 1998 and published by Virgin. Although quite a different game, the gooey blob made a reappearance there.

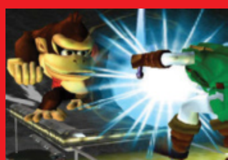
**Why do you think *Chaos* has such enduring appeal?**
It was a great multiplayer game that you could play on one Spectrum with up to eight players, and a battle could finish in reasonable time. Plus, the way randomness was used in the game guaranteed a different experience with each game. I think the creature illusion bluff mechanic also made for an interesting psychological ploy.



## 111 Super Smash Bros. Melee

■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: GameCube
■ Previous position: New Entry

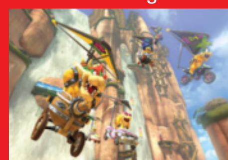
What's not to like about making Mario, Link, Mr. Game And Watch et al beat seven shades out of each other? Instantly accessible and fun in multiplayer, there's always beauty – and swear words – amidst this chaos.



## 110 Mario Kart 8

■ Year: 2014 ■ Platform: Wii U
■ Previous position: New Entry

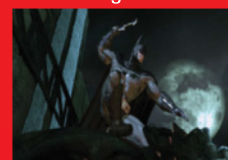
The latest iteration of this venerable series manages to keep everything that made the series great in the first place whilst adding coats of clever modern polish. One of the most recent games to make our list and we sense it will be on future countdowns for years to come.



## 109 Batman Arkham Asylum

■ Year: 2009 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry

Superhero videogames have a somewhat chequered history but this startling first instalment of what would prove to be an excellent series of *Batman* games exceeded all expectations.



# STEVE SANDERS: KING OF KONG?

## 108 Donkey Kong

■ Year: 1981 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 77



**Tell us about *The Video Master's Guide To Donkey Kong*?**
I contacted Bantam Books and spoke to Jack Looney, the executive in charge of their gaming books and he put me in contact with Walter Day at Twin Galaxies [the official keeper of high scores]. He told me that my score of 175,000 was the highest at the time. I called Jack Looney back with the news of my 'world record' and soon had a book contract. I took half of the $5,000 advance and purchased my own machine. I played every day and reached the kill screen. The best part about writing the book was being at the arcades and having kids walk up to me and say, 'Wow, you're really good! You must have read the book.' I would look at them, smile, and say "I wrote the book."

**You appeared in the famous *Life* magazine photo of 1983 featuring high scorers but have since admitted you lied about your *Donkey Kong* score.**
One of the greatest regrets I have in my life was that I allowed my desire to maintain my record-holder status led me to lie about my high scores. I sacrificed my integrity on the altar of vanity and 'fame'. I hurt a lot of people, but perhaps more than anyone else, I hurt Billy Mitchell. It should have been him on that *Donkey Kong* machine in the picture, not me. The fact that Billy forgave me and eventually became one of my best friends is a testament to his wonderful character. The wound that was in my soul when I confessed has healed but the scar made me a better man for it. I learned the hard way that nothing good comes from lying. The truth will out. Better to be on the side of the truth when it does.

**Why are people still playing *Donkey Kong* competitively all these years later?**
*Donkey Kong* is elegant. One joystick and one button. Simple to learn but nearly impossible to master, like all of the great games and thanks to the ubiquitous Mario, it will never be forgotten. I suspect that someday someone will break the 1.2 million point barrier but not by much!



## 107 3D Deathchase

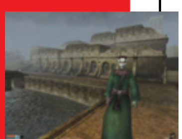
■ Year: 1981 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 77 ▼



It might be simple, but there was something about *3D Deathchase* that was just so compelling. Racing through a forest on a bike sounds exciting, but it was the 3D graphics made it intense.

## 106 The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

■ Year: 2002 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



The *Elder Scrolls* series has gone from strength to strength, but it's the third instalment that remains an all-time classic due to its beautiful world, rich RPG mechanics and completely open gameplay.

## 105 Syndicate

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

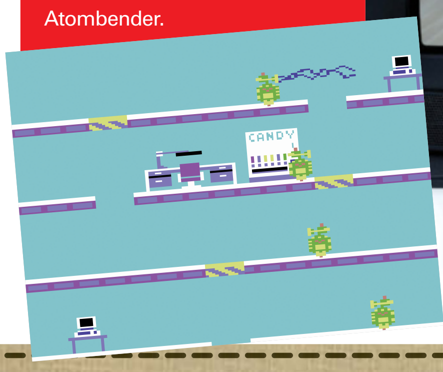


The heyday of Bullfrog gave us some real classics, and *Syndicate*'s unique squad-based mechanics, cool cyberpunk setting and freeform player-led gameplay made it one Bullfrog's best.

## 104 Impossible Mission

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: C64
■ Previous position: 45 ▼

Describing a game as simple to grasp as *Impossible Mission* doesn't really do it much justice, but at the time there were few games as exciting or as slick as this spy's race against the clock to defeat the villainous Professor Atombender.




# GARY WINNICK HOUSE OF FUN

## 103 Day of the Tentacle

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: N/E ☆



**Why do you think *Day Of The Tentacle* has stayed in the hearts of gamers for so long?**
I think we were evolving a newer look, as at the time as the technology had advanced enough for us to go to a higher resolution. We were inspired by a number of classic cartoon styles, including an off-kilter Chuck Jones sensibility. Between this and more fluid animation we were definitely approaching something that could be considered an early interactive-cartoon. Certainly the characters personality, humor and puzzles were as top notch as what we expected.

**Did it feel like you had something special during development?**
From my perspective, I felt it was definitely a worthy successor to *Maniac Mansion* which remains dear to myself and numerous fans today. I really enjoyed the brainstorming with Tim and Dave, with Ron weighing in as well. As far as audience response in those days we really didn't have a clue as to how a project might be received, at the time I don't remember the sales being spectacular. I think it's taken a long while to become more popular, I think the advent of the internet has changed things as reviewers and top games of all times lists help spur popularity.

# THREE STEPS TO ULTIMATE GAMING

## 102 Jetpac

■ Year: 1983 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 52 ▼

**Great graphics**
For the time the bright and vivid graphics of *Jetpac* were something of a revelation. They were crisp and clear and colourful and really made for a fantastic adventure. The graphics even hold up now, in fact, and stand out among its contemporaries.

**Simple but addictive**
Your goal on each stage wasn't especially difficult to grasp – collect some rocket parts, refuel the ship and blast off to the next planet – but it meant that you kept on wanting to see how long you could survive against a new planet's aliens, and beat your highest score.

**Super smooth controls**
This was perhaps the element that stood out the most and really made the game one of the best of its time. The smooth movement of the character and his jet pack-powered flight made for a quick, fluid game that really rewarded skill.

# SEGA MAKE SOME CRAZY MONEY

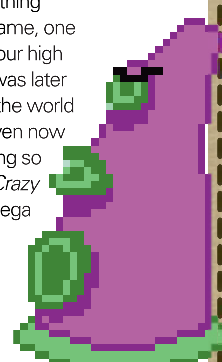
## 101 Crazy Taxi

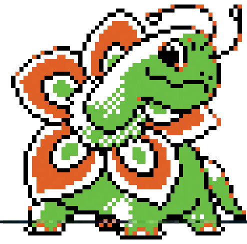
■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆




There's a sort of bittersweetness to *Crazy Taxi*. The moment you mention it every retro gamer worth their salt ought to become a little teary-eyed, since *Crazy Taxi* epitomises everything good about Sega's unfairly ill-fated console, the beloved Dreamcast. It was bright, fun, brash and innovative, and it was impossible for anyone who played it to not be filled with joy.

The concept of *Crazy Taxi* was such a simple one, leveraging the arcade-style gameplay from where it originally came to offer console players something new. This made for a thoroughly replayable game, one that you could return to many times to beat your high score, discover new shortcuts. Of course, it was later ported to PS2 and GameCube so the rest of the world could enjoy it, but even now there's just something so 'Dreamcast' about *Crazy Taxi*. It encapsules Sega of the time, a Sega that we all miss.



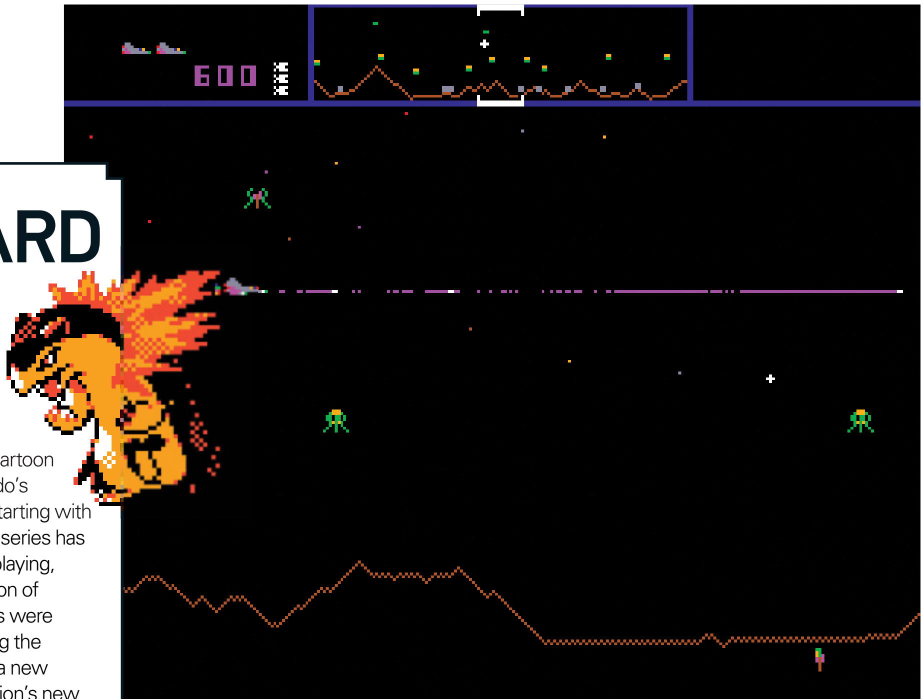


# THE **GOLD** STANDARD IN **POKÉMON**

## 100 Pokémon Gold & Silver

■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: GBC ■ Previous position: N/E ▲

Whether you love or hate the innumerable console and handheld titles, cartoon and movie spin-offs or cuddly plush toys, there's no denying that Nintendo's *Pokémon* phenomenon has a significant place in videogaming history. Starting with *Pocket Monsters Red And Green* for the original Game Boy in 1996, the series has captured the imaginations of generations of gamers with its mix of role-playing, monster-hunting, training, battling and trading. With the second generation of *Pokémon* titles, *Gold And Silver*, released for the Game Boy in 1999, fans were able to get their hands on a new range of one hundred monsters, bringing the number of trainable Pokémon to over 250. *Gold And Silver* took place in a new location called Johto with players tasked with battling to become the region's new Pokémon Master. New features included a real-time day and night system, with some monsters only appearing at certain times, two new Pokémon types (Dark and Steel) and a much improved interface and inventory system. Another new mechanic was the ability to breed Pokémon from eggs, with the offspring inheriting qualities and battle techniques from its parents. *Pokémon Gold And Silver* were the games that began the transformation of the series into a multi-billion dollar franchise for Nintendo, one that continues to this day.









# EUGENE JARVIS GETS NOSTALGIC

## 99 Defender

■ Year: 1981 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: N/E ▲



With *Defender* I wanted to do a game that broke new ground, to create the ultimate experience I craved as a gamer. The expanded universe of multiple scrolling screens provided both depth of gameplay, plus it was a real adrenaline rush to fly around the planet at insane speeds, rescuing and protecting the astronauts on the ground from the enemy assault. The elements of trajectory and collision, life and death, are very basic, challenging player's instincts in an intuitive way. A key element of the design, in addition to the violence, explosions, and killer graphics, was presenting the player with multiple goals and threats at all times. So not only do you have to engage the twitch centres of your brain but also a higher level of decision-making. This created the Total Brain Rush (TBR) that players craved! I remember when we launched the game people didn't know what to make of it because it had so many buttons. But I think that's what added to its long term appeal… In the hands of a *Defender* virtuoso the game can be amazing to experience. In the hands of a novice it is a nightmare of complexity!

## 98 Civilization IV

■ Year: 2005 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



A brilliant reimagining of the classic historical turn-based strategy game for modern platforms, *Civ IV* made Sid Meier's masterpiece more accessible than ever before, incorporating an all-new 3D engine and adding new features like fully promotable units, religions and a hugely enjoyable multiplayer mode.

## 97 Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

■ Year: 2004 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

After *Sons Of Liberty*, this sequel returned to what made the series great, immersing players in a Cold War setting which saw Snake stalking through jungles relying on his wits, camo and his combat prowess.



## 96 Portal 2

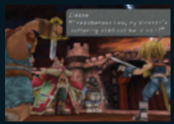
■ Year: 2011 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Featuring the welcome return of GLaDOS, one of gaming's greatest antagonists, this post-apocalyptic return to the Aperture Science Labs raised the bar in terms of graphics, environments and often hilarious dialogue courtesy of Stephen Merchant as paranoid robotic companion Wheatley.

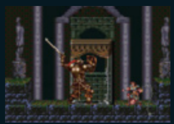


## 95 Final Fantasy IX
■ Year: 2000 ■ Platform: PSone
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Squaresoft pleased long-term *FF* fans with this last outing on the PSone, discarding the futurism of *VIII* and reverting to a medieval setting harking back to its much-loved classics on the Nintendo consoles.

## 94 Super Castlevania IV
■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: SNES
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Still one of the finest entries in Konami's vampire-slaying franchise, *Castlevania IV* was an excellent showcase for the SNES with its epic whip-flailing boss fights, fiendish level design and brilliant soundtrack.

## 93 Advance Wars
■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: GBA
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



The perfect pocket-sized strategy game, *Advance Wars* was an essential purchase for GBA owners, and showed publishers that it wasn't just Japanese gamers that loved turn-based tactics.

## 92 Alex Kidd in Miracle World
■ Year: 1986 ■ Platform: Master System
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



Before Sonic, lovable monkey-boy Alex Kidd was Sega's unofficial mascot, and in many ways his colourful platform game debut is an even more impressive achievement than *Super Mario Bros.*.

## 91 Ico
■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

A haunting and supremely stylish puzzle-platform adventure, *Ico* remains one of the most creative and touching fantasy game experiences of the past few decades, influencing the design of recent classics like *Dark Souls*.










# WAR BY NUMBERS

## 90 Word Of Warcraft
■ Year: 2004 ■ Platform: PC ■ Previous position: New Entry ▲

It might not have been the first MMO, but it is arguably the most influential, leaving behind a legacy that has been copied by virtually everything in its wake. You'll never forget your first trip to Azeroth and one visit is never enough.

■ *World Of Warcraft* was the **fourth released game** set in the fantasy *Warcraft* universe.

■ It is officially the highest grossing videogame of all time, making in excess of **ten billion US dollars** by July 2012.

■ Developer Blizzard Entertainment still earns roughly **one billion US dollars** yearly with the game.

■ Over **12 million** physical boxed copies of the game have been sold since its launch in 2004.

■ In January 2014 Blizzard announced that over **100 million user accounts** had been generated in the game's lifetime.

■ Roughly **48 per cent** of the game's subscriber-base is in Asia. The second biggest player base is the USA with around **22 per cent**.

■ The realm of Azeroth in which the game is set is approximately **80 square miles**, about four times the size of Manhattan Island.

■ The Hunter and Death Knight are the most commonly used character classes in the game, both netting around **11 per cent** of users.

■ The most popular profession in Azeroth is mining, with **35.8 per cent** of players choosing to don a helmet and seek wealth underground.

■ **One in every five** *World Of Warcraft* players is female.

■ According to Blizzard's Frank Pearce the game is constructed from **5.5 million** lines of code.

■ In 2009 the game already contained **70,000 spells** and nearly **40,000 non-player characters**.

■ **Five expansions** have been released for the game to date, with a sixth, *Legion*, to come in mid-2016.

■ One of the rarest mounts in the game is the Heavenly Onyx Cloud Serpent, with a drop chance of just **0.03 per cent**.

■ With over **100,000 pages**, WOWWiki is the largest community-run website of any videogame on the internet.



# 150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

## 89 Streets Of Rage
■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Mega Drive
■ Previous position: New Entry



Mega Drive owners might not have had *Final Fight*, but they didn't need it – Sega's unashamed clone was every bit as good, thanks to tight gameplay and an amazing soundtrack.

## 88 Quake
■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: New Entry



*Doom* was a tough act to follow, but id Software managed it by creating a full-3D first-person shooter that became a leading light of the online multiplayer scene.

## 87 The Legend Of Zelda
■ Year: 1986 ■ Platform: NES
■ Previous position: New Entry



In an age of simple arcade action games, *Zelda* stood out by offering players an absorbing quest across a wide-open map. Plus, who could forget the oft-revisited musical accompaniment?

## 86 Final Fight
■ Year: 1989 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: New Entry



Mike Haggar's quite direct, isn't he? Most mayors start a scheme to combat crime – Capcom's favourite politician walks down the street punching criminals right in the face. Awesome.

## 85 Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
■ Year: 2004 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: New Entry

The final *GTA* of its generation took the series to the early-Nineties LA, and added mechanics that allowed protagonist CJ to improve his fitness, appearance and more.






# HOW SEGA MADE ITS ICONIC SHOOTER

## 84 Rez
■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: Dreamcast ■ Previous position: New Entry

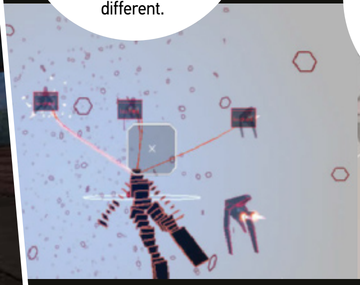
**How did you decide on *Rez*'s abstract wireframe look?**

**Jake Kazdal:** I was out clubbing in Tokyo and on the wall a VJ was playing one of the early Winamp plug-ins, with the wireframe mesh being distorted by the music and pulsing different shapes and colours. I was awestruck, so I took video of it with my friend's camera, and showed it to [Shuji] Utsumi-San (now the CEO of Q Entertainment, but then head of Sega R&D) and Mizuguchi-san the next Monday, and it stuck. The wireframe look was born! We had been through many major look changes, so I wasn't sure this one was going to stick, either, but the team quickly took a liking to it.

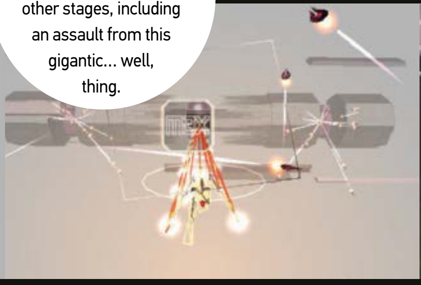
***Rez*'s boss battles were epic multi-stage encounters. How were these designed?**

**Osamu Kodera:** The boss encounters were the result of a collaboration of the boss artist and myself. First he would create a simple storyboard, sort of like a four-frame comic strip. The artist and myself would then discuss the details and workflow. I'd

## YOUR GUIDE TO REZ'S LAST AREA



■ The level starts off even less structured than most, and unusually has a light background – this is clearly something different.



■ Attacks come far faster and more ferociously than in other stages, including an assault from this gigantic… well, thing.

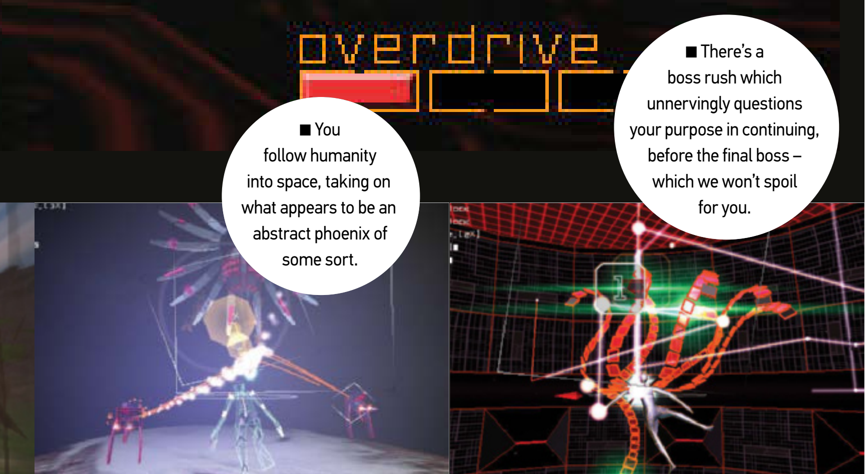



■ As you move through each area, Katsumi Yokota's poem about evolution fills you in on the theme of the stage.

then create a rough prototype, and if it seemed to work we'd continue our progress, but if it didn't work, we'd go back to step one. The biggest challenge was to incorporate and condense a variety of ideas into a short boss battle experience. All of the bosses were reconstructed at least three times.

**Area 5 is a memorable final stage which differs noticeably from the earlier stages. What inspired it?**
**Katsumi Yokota:** Area 5 differs from the other stages as it has a message incorporated into the design. Looking back now, I am a little embarrassed by the text that appears every time there is an area change. This was taken from a sort of poem that I wrote about the evolution of life. The backgrounds in each area were designed based on this text. I wrote this text as homage to the birth of life, the repeated process of mass extinctions, and the unending chain of life that creates such weird and wonderful lifeforms.

**Looking back at *Rez*, how do you feel about the game?**
**Tetsuya Mizuguchi:** Creatively speaking I was very happy, but from a business point of view I felt a little bit sad. I didn't expect too much at the time, but many people expected much bigger sales, like marketing people and business people. My feeling is that the reaction to *Rez* is bigger now than it was. I'm happy and surprised that people continue to talk about *Rez*.




■ You follow humanity into space, taking on what appears to be an abstract phoenix of some sort.

■ There's a boss rush which unnervingly questions your purpose in continuing, before the final boss – which we won't spoil for you.

# HOW CAPCOM PERFECTED A CLASSIC

## 83 Resident Evil

■ Year: 2002 ■ Platform: GameCube ■ Previous position: New Entry

- It extensively redesigned puzzles and a new mansion layout means that your experience of the original game won't help you.
- The new re-reanimated Crimson Head Zombies provide a nasty surprise for all players, and fundamentally alter your approach to enemies.
- New defensive items give you more combat options when you're in a bind, and provide some uniquely gory enemy deaths.
- The indestructible test subject Lisa Trevor gave the game a brand new impact moment to close out the first disc.
- Fully redrawn visuals made the game look phenomenal in 2002, and held up superbly well in the 2015 HD re-release.



# THE PERFECT GAME?

## 82 Super Mario Galaxy 2

■ Year: 2010 ■ Platform: Wii ■ Previous position: New Entry

Nintendo's sequel did that rare thing – it improved on its predecessor in every possible way. *SMG 2* remains a stunning platformer that we never tire of.

**100%** The score we gave it in issue 79

**0** Number of other games we've awarded a full 100%

**49** Galaxies to visit

**1** Number of years development was meant to take

**6,720,000** Number of copies sold

**242** Stars to collect

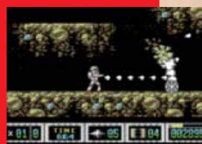
**97** The game's score on Metacritic

**2.5** Number of years development actually took



## 81 Turrican II

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 76 ▼



This is as close as Dolph Lungren is ever going to get to a 'Greatest Games Ever' feature – the *Universal Soldier* movie tie-in reskin may not have made the list, but the amazing scrolling shooter on which it was based did. Good work, people.

## 80 Command & Conquer

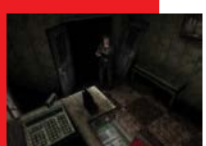
■ Year: 1995 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



As if this seminal RTS was going to miss out on the action. A console release (with mouse support on PSone, no less) won't have hurt its chances, and the live action cut-scenes have somehow managed to age worse than the game itself.

## 79 Silent Hill 2

■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



At a time where jump scares ruled, Konami managed to make a horror game which for psychological oppression. Perfect design and world-building mean this list would be worse were it not for the involvement of Harry Mason.

## 78 Kevin Bayliss on Donkey Kong Country

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: SNES
■ Previous position: New Entry ✰



It's simply so memorable; the game played so well, and it was a perfect way to reintroduce *Donkey Kong*. The technique we used to create the 3D-looking sprites worked amazingly and it breathed new life into the SNES. I'll always be proud of the game and what we achieved.



# BRINGING THE EXCITEMENT OF THE CINEMA TO YOUR CONSOLE

## 77 Uncharted 2

■ Year: 2009 ■ Platform: PS3 ■ Previous position: New Entry ✰

Few developers understand the importance of a strong opening quite like Naughty Dog clearly did in creating *Uncharted 2*'s prologue. Non-linear narrative allowed the team to open with the stunning set-piece that sees an injured Drake painstakingly climb dangling train carriages, before starting the game proper via a flashback that puts everything in perspective. While the original release stands up primarily as a solid proof-of-concept, the sequel remains one of the greatest action games ever made and it's telling of its quality that even *Tomb Raider* – a franchise which itself helped shape the likes of *Uncharted* – finds itself referring back to this gaming touchstone. Set-pieces are on point (the supernatural guff that kicks in later perhaps notwithstanding), platforming and gunplay are more than tight enough to carry the game but it's the cinematic nature of *Uncharted 2* that scores it a place in the history books, blurring the lines between Hollywood and Silicon Valley in an action gaming experience that is arguably still to be matched in terms of impact.





# 10 FOR 10

## 76 Final Fantasy X

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: N/E ✰

- It was the first *FF* to be fully voiced… if perhaps not all that well.
- The Sphere Grid offered unparalleled customisation of your chosen party.
- Shifting to full-3D environments gave a real sense of exploration and discovery.
- Blitzball remains one of the single greatest mini-games of all time.
- The laughing scene is *supposed* to be awful. It's all about Tidus and Yuna's awkwardness, after all.
- Seymour's hair is as inexplicable today as it was at launch. It looks like antlers but apparently, it isn't.
- *Otherworld* actually evolved into a great piece of music when recorded by Uematsu's band, The Black Mages.
- Speaking of which, *FFX* is the last mainline game where Uematsu was the primary tunesmith.
- Post-game secrets like the Dark Aeons afforded the game even more longevity.
- Making Kimarhi such as waste of space made it much easier to decide on a solid party.









# SEGA'S MASCOT SEES RED

## 75 Sonic 3 & Knuckles

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: Mega Drive ■ Previous position: N/E ✰

It's no surprise to see make *Sonic & Knuckles* make the list here in some form – with its plug-through cartridge allowing for previous games to be modified as well as the main adventure as well, it's effectively four games in one. Well, assuming you count the ability to play the bonus stage by using a cart other than *Sonic 2* or *Sonic 3* as a separate game, anyway. With the main *Sonic & Knuckles* game showing a shift towards the slower pace and exploration focus that later games like *Sonic CD* would take further still, it's also no surprise that most votes for this came for *Sonic 3 & Knuckles* – both *Sonic 2* and *Sonic 3* had a noticeably faster pace and better flow to stages, plus the ability to glide and climb as Knuckles gives players the option for additional freedom and exploration as well. It's the best of both worlds, really. Even though *Sonic & Knuckles* itself may have been a more richly detailed game visually, going back to the older games via its novel plug-through option never felt like a step back and even today, those older games retain the same character and charm thanks largely to the excellent (if decidedly Nineties) art style.



# MARK PACINI AND KENSUKE TANABE DISCUSS THE CREATION OF RETRO STUDIOS' HIT GAMECUBE GAME

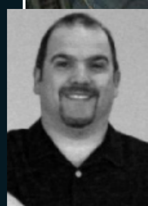
## 74 Metroid Prime ■ Year: 2002 ■ Platform: GameCube ■ Previous position: New Entry

**Why shift *Metroid* into a a first-person adventure game?**
MP: When *Metroid Prime* was released, no one else was concentrating on the exploration and platforming elements in a first-person game. We were dubbed as an FPA (first-person adventure), which to us meant that the core gameplay was not about shooting enemies but rather the immersive experience of being Samus and exploring the environment. We were able to differentiate our game by focusing on those aspects, and I think people felt it to be unique.

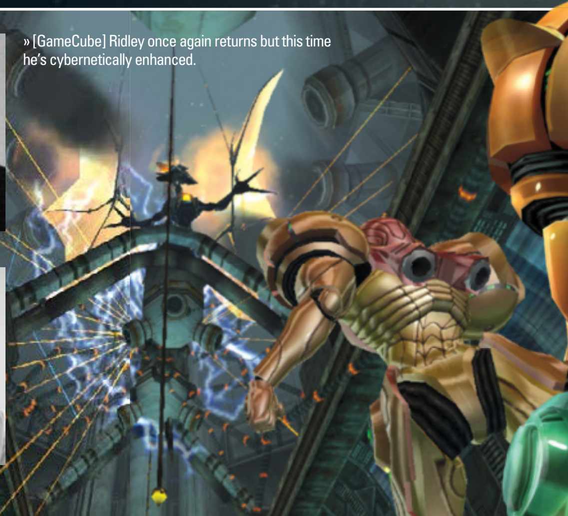
**Is it true Shigeru Miyamoto was involved with *Metroid Prime*?**
MP: Mr Miyamoto came to us with the idea of playing a *Metroid* game from the first-person perspective. He felt that the best way to play a 3D game where the character had a gun was from a first-person viewpoint. At first, we were not seeing his vision and we knew the fans would have the same initial reaction. However, as we started down this path, many unique gameplay opportunities came to light and we began to get very excited about the possibilities. If we were excited, *Metroid* fans probably would be as well.

**What were your inspirations?**
MP: Our main inspiration was *Super Metroid*. That's all you need. We also tried to preserve the essence of the *Metroid* experience in its move to 3D. It couldn't just be a 3D game starring Samus. It had to be *Metroid*. That was probably the most difficult part of the whole development process.

**What can you tell us about the scanning mechanics?**
KT: During the process of developing *Metroid Prime*, we asked Retro Studios to incorporate a visor system into the game in order to make it clearly new and differentiated from first-person shooter games. We set up the 'Scan Visor', which was a visor that the player used to scan necessary information, as one of plural visors, we thought this feature would help users who wanted to know more information about the setting by actively utilising, for example, a Pirate Log.
MC: The main reason for scanning was to give more motivation for the player to look around and explore the environment. It also helped remind the player to use their different visors throughout the game. As the series has continued, the scanning feature has played less of a role, but we still find it is very useful in terms of giving the player hints and information.


» Mark Pacini


» Kensuke Tanabe

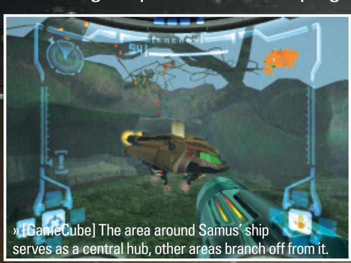

» [GameCube] Ridley once again returns but this time he's cybernetically enhanced.

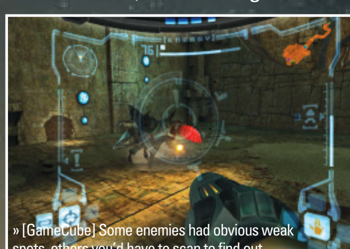


> "The player was able to play the entire game without a break in the action"
> Mark Pacini

**What do you feel that specifically made *Metroid Prime* such an immersive experience?**
MP: Probably the feature that really helped immerse the player was the absence of loading screens. The player was able to play the entire game without a break in the action.

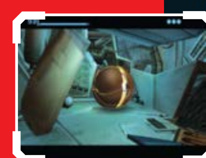
**Were you concerned *Metroid Prime* might be too difficult?**
KT: These days, such games that a player can complete by just spending time playing without deeply thinking may tend to be welcomed more. From that perspective, *Metroid Prime* can be seen as a very tough game. However, Nintendo's game philosophy is that we hope users feel accomplishment and are impressed by thinking while playing the game. We also want players to feel their skills are improving.


» [GameCube] The area around Samus' ship serves as a central hub, other areas branch off from it.

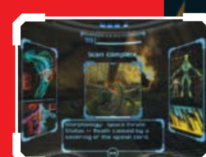

» [GameCube] Some enemies had obvious weak spots, others you'd have to scan to find out.

### 5 THINGS THAT DEFINE METROID PRIME

**USE OF 3D**
■ The move to 3D was just as assured as Nintendo's earlier franchises jumping to 3D on the N64.



**SCANNING**
■ Scanning pretty much everything proved to be a clever way of delving into *Prime*'s backstory.



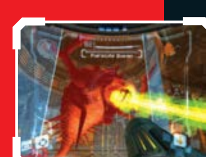
**ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS**
■ Steam, lightning strikes and other elements all display on Samus' visor.



**MAP**
■ The map for *Metroid Prime* was not only unique to the series, but was also a joy to use and incredibly helpful.



**BOSSES**
■ While some of the bosses are a little familiar, they're still immensely challenging to battle against.

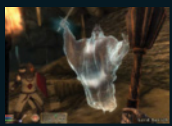




## 73 The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

■ Year: 2006 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry

You don't realise how claustrophobic the opening of *Oblivion* is until you step out into an open wilderness that's full of possibilities and exciting quests. It's a living, breathing world that just begs to be explored, while the plot itself is a huge improvement over the earlier games in the series.



## 72 Mario Kart 64

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: N64
■ Previous position: 80 ▲

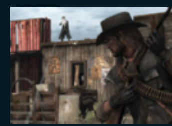
The second game in the series saw it move into party territory, due to the open tracks and the introduction of the spiny shell. While it's not our personal favourite *Mario Kart* game, there's no denying that the large number of tracks and fantastic multiplayer constantly kept you playing.



## 71 Red Dead Redemption

■ Year: 2010 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry

Essentially it's just *GTA* on a horse, but look past those similarities and you'll find *RDR* to be an assured open world game. The story and characters are a cut above their *GTA* counterparts and it's supported by *Undead Nightmare*, one of the best pieces of DLC in recent memory.



## 70 Secret Of Mana

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: SNES
■ Previous position: 74

Square's *Mana* series came of age on the SNES, building upon the Game Boy adventure games to deliver a truly gripping adventure. While the combat is simple, the unique NPCS, assisting characters and fantastical setting keeps your attention. Little wonder it now fetches insane prices on eBay.



# WHY THIS ZELDA IS DIFFERENT TO THE REST

## 69 The Legend Of Zelda: Majora's Mask

■ Year: 2000 ■ Platform: N64 ■ Previous position: N/E

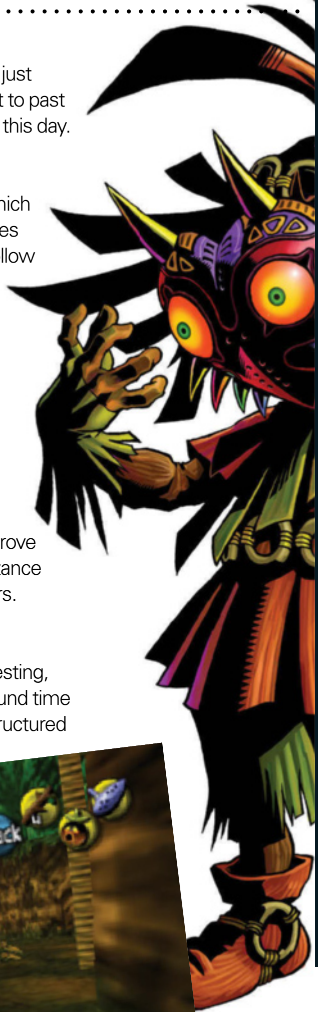
**Three days...**
Having to complete the game in just three days was radically different to past *Zelda* games and divides fans to this day.

**Masks**
There are 24 different masks, which give Link a range of unique abilities that include getting animals to follow him and attracting stray fairies.

**Darkness**
Its alternate universe allowed Nintendo to make a game that was much darker in tone to previous games.

**Expansion Pak**
The N64 expansion pack was critical, allowing Nintendo to improve the game's aesthetics, draw distance and add more in-game characters.

**Complex narrative**
*Majora's Mask* features an interesting, engaging story that revolves around time travel. As a result it's far more structured than earlier games.







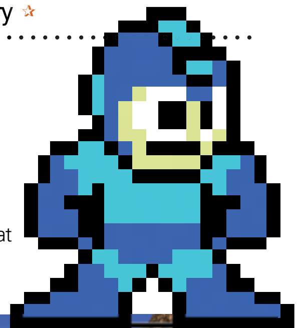


# CAPCOMS MEGA SEQUEL

## 68 Mega Man 2

■ Year: 1988 ■ Platform: NES ■ Previous position: New Entry

If ever one *Mega Man* was going to make your list it was going to be Capcom's sequel to the original. It not only massively improves on the numerous imbalances found in the first game, but sets the template for many later *Mega Man* games, too. It's still a painfully tough game in places, but the level design feels far tighter and fairer than the original *Mega Man*. It dumps the score system of the original game, gives you eight and not six bosses to fight (a trope that would remain for later games) and adds a useful password system. It's the best-selling game in the series and for good reason.



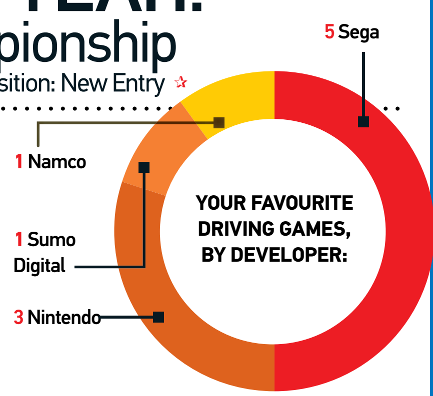


# GAME OVER, YEAH!

## 67 Sega Rally Championship

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: New Entry

*Sega Rally* can be beaten in full, with all the secrets seen, in less than five minutes. However, the three (or four) tracks you'll play in that brief time are so well-designed that every turn becomes seared into your memory, as you fight the terrain to achieve the fastest possible time. You'll expect to play for five minutes and end up playing for years.



# ANDREW BRAYBROOK GOES OVER THE RAINBOW

## 66 Rainbow Islands

■ Year: 1988 ■ Platform: NES ■ Previous position: 30 ▼



**All of Graftgold's *Rainbow Islands* ports were impressive. Which is your personal favourite and why?**
My favourite actually might have been the Sega Saturn version in enhanced graphics mode. We got to use a bit of semi-transparency on the rainbows, and added an extra back-layer of graphics, so we could be a bit creative. Taito quite liked what we did, and let us continue, whereas I believe it vetoed the *Bubble Bobble* equivalent. Our graphics artist Colin Seaman, led the graphics in just the right way to do a splendid job in keeping with the original style. Can't praise his contribution highly enough. I believe we got everything running at the proper 50 frames-per-second, which even the mighty Amiga was unable to do.

In terms of achievement, Gary Foreman did a great job on the C64 as there was a lot of movement going on, and despite colour attribute difficulties the Spectrum version also coped better than we thought it would.

**How challenging was it to recreate the power of arcade games on 8 and 16-bit computers?**
We were chasing the arcade in terms of colours and number of sprites. *Rainbow Islands* only had one layer of 8x8 pixel backgrounds, but then used another one for the sea rising. We had to be a bit inventive with simulating that. The sprites had more and different colours than the backgrounds, I reckon they had maybe 16 palettes of 16 colours available. We had to resolve that down to one palette of 16 colours on 16-bit, and less on the 8-bits.

**Why do you think *Rainbow Islands* proved to be so popular with gamers?**
A lot of design time had gone into the game at Taito, we could see that from the massive folder of documentation we received. It looked like up to two years of design work. Some of it had changed over the project so we couldn't always tell what made it into the final game. There's a lot in the bonuses and upgrades that isn't immediately obvious, but can be determined over time. Even the simplicity of getting the gem colour that you want, it's so obvious when you know how.

**What are your thoughts on *Rainbow Island*'s play mechanics?**
I learned a lot from how the bonuses worked, and how the meanies all did or didn't interact with the background. Presentation is excellent, the 'GOAL IN!' sequence, for example, is all very grand and well thought out. We had enough documentation to make our conversions very accurate in terms of how they played, the look would vary depending on the hardware. There're also three different endings. We thought there were only two, but we had some graphics we hadn't seen, and imagine our surprise when we discovered the three islands that popped up. Nobody knew they were there and we had quoted for seven islands. The extra three islands lead to the third ending but are as big as the first seven and we had less graphics supplied. It would have taken us a lot more time. Even when we got the job for the Saturn, PlayStation and PC versions we were only asked to convert the first seven.

# UF-WHOA!

## 65 UFO: Enemy Unknown

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: PC ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

The isometric viewpoint of *UFO: Enemy Unknown* should make you feel less connected to your troops. Well, it doesn't – we're still torn up whenever we lose a veteran to a tactical slip-up and a lucky alien shot. Turn-based strategy is rarely better than this.



# PLATFORM HEAVEN

## 64 Banjo-Kazooie

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: N64 ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

We're not surprised to see *Banjo* chart so high. Alongside *Super Mario 64*, it rates as not only one of the best platformers upon the system, but also the genre too. Rare created an imaginative, wonderous world and tied it to two ridiculously lovable characters. Little wonder there's so much interest in spiritual follow-up *Yooka-Laylee*.



150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!



## 63 Star Wars

■ Year: 1983 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: 87 ▲



Be Luke Skywalker? Check. Use the power of the force? Sure, you got it. Blow up the Death Star? But of course! Atari's classic vector coin-op perfectly captured the X-wing fantasies of just about every human being on the planet in 1983, and it still does.

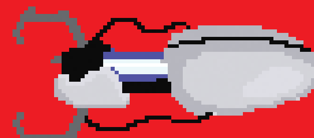
## 62 Civilization

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: 29 ▼

Turn to page 92 for the full Making Of



Are you up to the challenge of building an empire upon which the sun never sets? Sid Meier's turn-based strategy game was as influential as it was enjoyable, thanks to the challenge of taking your empire from 4000 BC to the near future.



## 61 Portal

■ Year: 2007 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



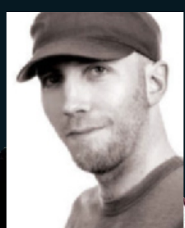
This highly innovative first-person puzzle game challenges you to think in full 3D, thanks to its innovative multi-purpose gun. With singing AIs, companion cubes and the promise of cake, this short adventure lingers in the memory for years after completion.



# PLAY'S LUKE ALBIGÉS PUTS EVERYTHING ON THE LINE

## 60 Mass Effect 2

■ Year: 2010 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

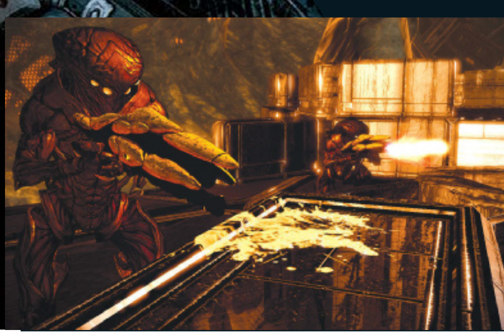


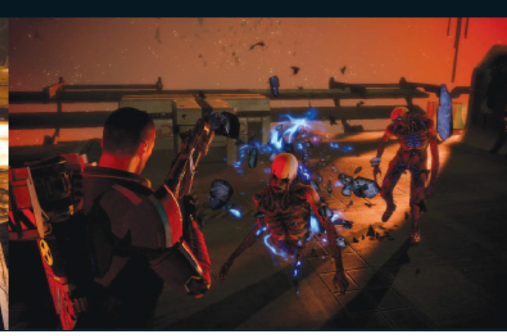
**How did Bioware improve on *Mass Effect*?**
To be honest, I think the original actually did a better job than *Mass Effect 2* in terms of lore-building… but that's only because the second game barely had to worry about that side of things. BioWare did *such* a good job of creating a sci-fi universe with the series opener that *Mass Effect 2* had far more space and freedom to grow as a game, something it absolutely did by pushing every other aspect to new heights.

**Why is it considered the best game in the series?**
Of the three, it strikes by far the best balance between narrative and action. The first game's aforementioned emphasis on lore made it feel more like an introduction than a game after having played the sequel, while *Mass Effect 3*'s action bent and ludicrous conclusion felt like a waste of all that hard work. To this day, I still can't believe it actually gave players the option to forgo story altogether…

**Was losing the Mako a good idea?**
Absolutely. Surface exploration was underdeveloped and getting it right would have required a significant redistribution of the resources *Mass Effect 2* clearly put to better use elsewhere. I certainly didn't miss it at all.

**What made *Mass Effect 2*'s climax so good?**
It's a combination of things, really. The so-called 'Suicide Mission' was expertly set up to feel like a last resort, one final push from which some (or all) of the crew might not return. Pair that with the fact that it comes after spending hours building relationships with those characters and their potential expendability becomes all the more powerful. Even when you were in control, clever design left a lingering fear that something could still go wrong at any turn.








# INFLUENCER 001 REPORTING

## 59 Paradroid

■ Year: 1985 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 23 ▼

Andrew Braybrook's stunning shoot-'em-up remains one of the best games on the Commodore 64. It's perfectly balanced, has clever, deliberate gameplay and features a host of different robots to attack and master.

**001** The number of the Influence Devices you control

**999** Controlling this unstable droid is the ultimate achievement

**97%** The score Zzap!64 awarded the game

**8** The number of ships in the game

**#1** Its position in our Top 25 C64 Games feature

**50%** The speed increase to Paradroid Competition Edition




# KEN SUGIMORI AND JUNICHI MASUDA TALK POKEMON… IT'S SUPER EFFECTIVE!

## 58 Pokémon Red & Blue

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: Game Boy ■ Previous position: New Entry

***Pokémon* spent quite a long time in development – why was that?**

**Sugimori:** It took about six years from the start of the concept to execution. We started the project right after *Quinty* was released and initially, we were aiming to have about fifty Pokémon. But every year, the technology improved so while it started at 50, by the end of about the fourth year we realised that we could do about 150 *Pokémon*. In that sense, I suppose we didn't really have a set target number – it just depended on the technology we had at the time.

**Why include different Pokémon types?**

**Sugimori:** By adding even one more type, it definitely makes the gameplay more complicated. So when we did that we had to really look into the battle balance – with new moves, there's an almost infinite combination. If we can solve that problem, we can always add more types – it's not impossible.

**The series' most distinguishing feature is its emphasis on multiplayer gaming, which is unusual for RPGs. Why did you focus on this?**

**Masuda:** People say that when you play videogames, you're usually playing on your own, so we wanted to create an experience where you can play the game but still play together with friends at the same time and all have fun. That was the basic idea I had in my mind when working on this game. You can battle together and trade with friends and family – you could even take your game to a store, find someone you never met and ask them to trade *Pokémon* or play together.

**Why do you feel that *Pokémon* remains so successful after so many years?**

**Sugimori:** At its simplest, it boils down to the fact that it's easy to understand and it has incredible diversity. The characters used today in the TV show or in the movies are based on the ones we create for the games and through its features, its abilities and its shape, you can quite easily get an idea of what kind of Pokémon it is. There's a great mix of cool and cute monsters, making it easy for the audience to pick their own favourite.

*Pokémon Red And Blue* is one of just two games which originated on the monochrome Game Boy to make this list!

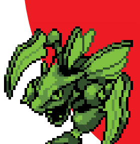

Ken Sugimori


Junichi Masuda



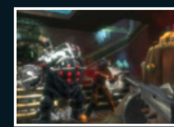

### EXCLUSIVE TO

| Pokémon Red | Pokémon Blue |
| --- | --- |
| Ekans | Sandshrew |
| Arbok | Sandslash |
| Oddish | Vulpix |
| Gloom | Ninetales |
| Vileplume | Meowth |
| Mankey | Persian |
| Primeape | Bellsprout |
| Growlithe | Weepinbell |
| Arcanine | Victreebell |
| Scyther | Magmar |
| Electabuzz | Pinsir |



## 57 Bioshock

■ Year: 2007 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry



This FPS featured one of gaming's greatest worlds in the underwater city of Rapture, and offered memorable gameplay too thanks to terrifying Big Daddy encounters and plasmid powers.

## 56 Dungeon Master

■ Year: 1987 ■ Platform: Atari ST
■ Previous position: 34

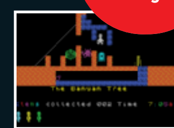


Real-time exploration made the corridors of *Dungeon Master* a dangerous place to be – safe places were rare indeed. Other developers took years to catch up with this phenomenal RPG.

## 55 Jet Set Willy

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 7

Turn to Page 74 for the Full Making Of



It might have needed a couple of pokes and a Quirkafleeg to make it work properly, but the stunning sequel to *Manic Miner* is one of the most iconic platformers of the 8-bit era.

## 54 Dark Souls

■ Year: 2011 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry

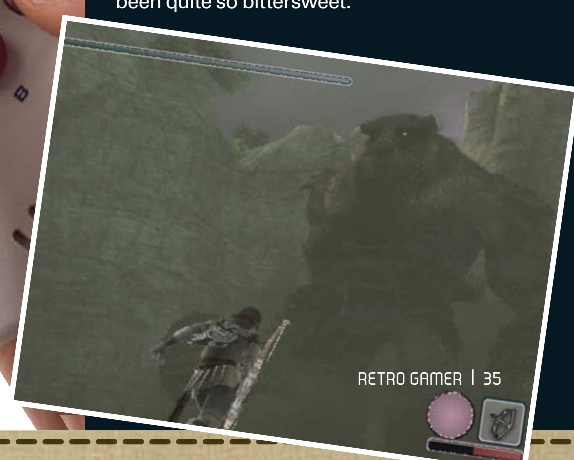


If you think that modern videogames are a bit soft, you owe it to yourself to play *Dark Souls*. From Software's brutal RPG is a compelling experience, blending strong design with an unrelenting – but rewarding – difficulty curve.

## 53 Shadow Of The Colossus

■ Year: 2005 ■ Platform: PS2
■ Previous position: New Entry

Essentially a series of battles against colossal bosses, this action-adventure game maintains a solemn atmosphere thanks to its barren setting and its plot. Victory has never been quite so bittersweet.



150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

# STRONG THE FORCE IS WITH GREG ZESCHUK

## 52 Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic

■ Year: 2003 ■ Platform: Xbox ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆





**How much freedom did you have when creating *KOTOR*?**
We had a great relationship with LucasArts, so that was the foundation of the freedom we had with *KOTOR*. There was a lot of mutual trust. We also decided to pursue the period thousands of years prior to the movies as the setting for the game because we knew that any games set around the movies had a lot more scrutiny. We had the choice of that period, or the time just after *Episode V*. In the development of the game itself we had a lot of freedom in deciding what to create and how it would be made. We worked with the production team at LucasArts and ran everything past them, but we took the lead on the development.

**How important was it to move away from the earlier films?**
We wanted to be unique and special, as well as having good development flexibility, so it was very important to be separate from the movies. Thus the Old Republic period choice. We wanted to create an environment for *KOTOR* that was still reminiscent of the movies, but also fit well into a period thousands of years before them. Ship and character designs should have some similarity, but be clear precursors to what people are familiar with from the films. However they still had to stand alone without being just a few tweaks on the later designs.

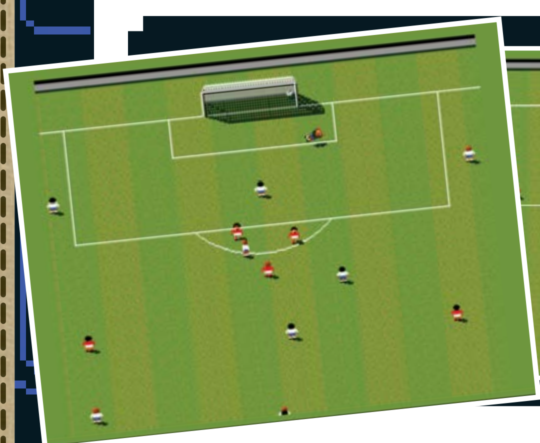
**Why did you slowly introduce new playable characters?**
We had a few common tactics that we have built upon over the years at BioWare. We learned that players didn't deal well with being presented with too many choices, and that choices in playable characters caused particular consternation so we preferred to slowly introduce characters and also give them a logical reason for being. We also made sure it was clear that each character had personal stories to explore so players had motivation to play them.

**What was the biggest technical challenge you faced?**
On the Xbox version we were extremely aggressive in the streaming of content in real-time over the disc drive. We discovered that the game ran smoothly on some Xbox consoles, and not on others. When we inquired about it Microsoft reluctantly admitted there were many different drives used in Xbox consoles along with different performance profiles, so it was clear we were pushing the data streaming past a safe limit. That was a harsh one to learn a couple months before release… It would have been nice if Microsoft was up-front about that variability!

**Why do you think *KOTOR* remains so well regarded by RPG fans?**
I'd say *KOTOR* was a hit for a variety of reasons. Technically it was right at the forefront of games, and a big advance over what we did previously and what other folks were doing at the time. The RPG systems were solid, and had a nice balance of customization and flexibility. These elements were important, but it was the story and experience of being at the core of a *Star Wars* adventure that made the game special. We made the player feel unique and core to the world, especially at the big twist, but also as though he or she was experiencing a *Star Wars* movie from the inside.









# GOOOOOOAL!

## 51 Sensible Soccer

■ Year: 1992 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 8 ▼

If you loved football in the Nineties, you're likely to remember some very distinctive oddities: ludicrous banana shots, vowel-switched players like 'Peul Gescoigne' and a match-up screen which mysteriously featured the same two players no matter which countries were playing. Yes, *Sensible Soccer* was a little bit odd, but by pulling back the viewpoint and making passing more intuitive, it captured the hearts of a public previously enthralled by the likes of *Kick Off 2*.



## 50 Doom II

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

*Doom II* is a sequel that plays it straight, delivering bigger levels, better multiplayer, more monsters and a Super Shotgun for good measure. Given how good *Doom* was, that's no bad thing – everyone else was still catching up, after all.



## 49 Deus Ex

■ Year: 2000 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

At the turn of the century, Ion Storm's classic was at the forefront of PC gaming thanks to an incredible blend of RPG and first-person shooting gameplay. Two sequels have come along, but neither has had the lasting impact of the original.



## 48 Robotron 2084

■ Year: 1982 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

How many Xbox Live Arcade games pinched their twin-stick controls from *Robotron*? Quite a few, but with good reason – Eugene Jarvis and Larry DeMar created one of the finest twitch shoot-'em-up experiences known to mankind.



# JON STOODLEY THE PERFECT PLAYER

## 47 Pac-Man

■ Year: 1980 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 10 ▼

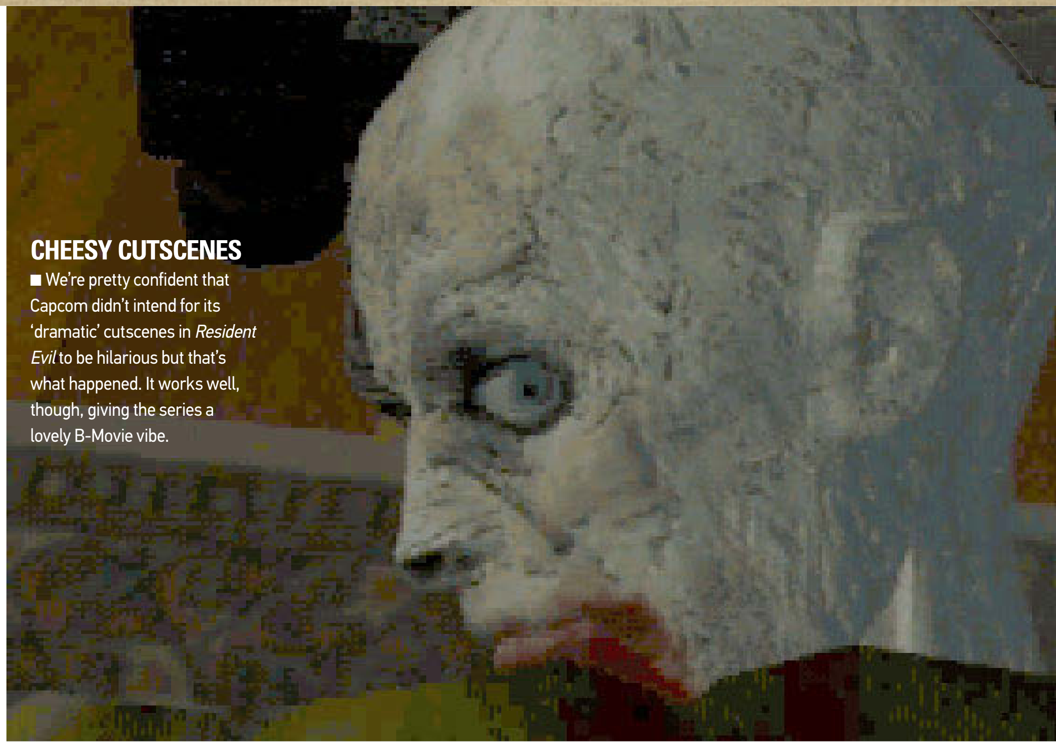


**When did *Pac-Man* first get your attention?**
I was a devoted *Berzerk* player in my local arcade, Las Vegas in Liverpool. It was early-1981 when it had a delivery whilst I was playing, and two huge machines were wheeled onto the arcade floor. They were twin screen *Pac-Man* cabs and everyone looked in amazement, including me! It wasn't until later on that year that I would accompany my brother Peter (who by then was a 100k player) to a game of 'doubles' and it just clicked. Within a few weeks I had a six-figure score.

**What is it about *Pac-Man* that makes it such a great game?**
Without doubt its diversity. It seems to appeal to absolutely everyone, regardless of age or sex. Even if you don't particularly score big at *Pac-Man*, the game play is both very addictive and full of character. He was, after all, the first real character in a videogame and instead of just being a 'ship' in a shoot-'em-up, you were a virtual *Pac-Man* being hunted by ghosts. I guess he also responsible for spawning the phrase, 'I'm on my last man.'

**Why do you think *Pac-Man* is so popular with high scorers?**
I think the 'split-screen' and the 'perfect game' of *Pac-Man* will always be a huge draw for high score interest. The myth of the split-screen and unlike more commonly known 'kill screens', *Pac-Man* allows you to play your lives out. Perfect *Pac-Man* sometimes takes in excess of six hours. Never losing a life, never missing a blue ghost or bonus and never making a mistake makes the achievement of 'perfect *Pac-Man*' unique in classic gaming. It's a fantastically simple game on the surface, but underneath that surface it's incredibly tough with many layers of gameplay.

**What's your favourite aspect of *Pac-Man*'s game mechanics?**
I'm amazed at what the designers did with such little memory (in modern terms). *Pac-Man* has great AI and although the ghosts are not completely random in their movements, they did a great job, though. I play freehand for the first 20 boards and manipulate the ghosts to do what I want. Thing is, even the best players get caught out by an occasional and completely random movement which amazes me even today. Ghosts in the machine…



**CHEESY CUTSCENES**

■ We're pretty confident that Capcom didn't intend for its 'dramatic' cutscenes in *Resident Evil* to be hilarious but that's what happened. It works well, though, giving the series a lovely B-Movie vibe.

## 46 Lemmings

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 21 ▼



Mike Daily is over the moon that *Lemmings* made your list: "It's great that many gamers love *Lemmings*. I'd love Sony to do more with them. We believe the characters could be used in more than the current style, they're full of character and are ripe for different genres."



## 45 Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe

■ Year: 1990 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 43 ▼

It was hard not to be excited by *Speedball 2*. Like the best sequels it drastically improved on the mechanics of the previous game, but in this case it came at a high price. Let's bow our heads and take a brief moment to remember all the joysticks that fell to The Bitmap Brothers' gruelling futuristic sports game…

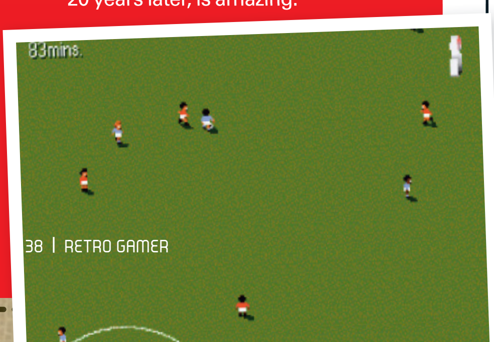


## 44 JON HARE ON SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 56 ▲



I am delighted to see *SWOS* placed so highly, considering how many great games have been made over the years. My intention with *SWOS* was to make a kind of computerised version of *Subbuteo* with the whole world of football at your fingertips and always someone there to play it with you, the computer if not your friends. The fact that it was inaugurated by Stanford University as one of the ten most influential games of all time is my greatest achievement to date and that people still love and play *SWOS* today, over 20 years later, is amazing.



# HOW CAPCOM **REINVENTED** THE **SURVIVAL HORROR** GENRE

## 43 Resident Evil

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: PSone ■ Previous position: New Entry ★

**CINEMATIC TRICKS**

■ Capcom made *Resident Evil* feel like a film by borrowing all sorts of useful tropes from the movies, including smart panning shots, seeing your character from the monster's view and, of course, traditional jump scares.

**ITEM STORAGE**

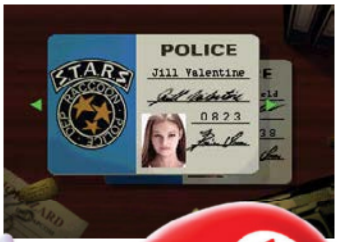
■ It infuriated many, but item storage became a crucial part of making it out of Spencer Mansion alive. You'd need to constantly juggle resources and have a good memory to ensure you always had what you needed.

**MULTIPLE CHARACTERS**

■ Unlike early survival horror games, *Resident Evil* gave you the choice of playing two characters, Jill Valentine and Chris Redfield. Both campaigns are notably different too, meaning plenty of replay value.








# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE **GRAVITY**

## 42 Super Mario Galaxy

■ Year: 2007 ■ Platform: Wii ■ Previous position: New Entry ★



Nintendo is amazing at making things feel new. When Mario first ran through World 1-1 of *Super Mario Bros.* it was fresh and exciting. Nintendo achieved the same effect when you first saw Mario appear in *Super Mario 64* and it pulled off the same trick yet again with *Super Mario Galaxy*. The first time you run around a planet and start leaping around while you're upside down is the moment you realise that Mario is the master of the platform genre. It's no surprise that so many of his games have gone on to appear in your final list.



# **KAZUMA KUJO** ON CREATING ONE OF THE ARCADE'S MOST **ICONIC SHOOTERS**

## 41 R-Type ■ Year: 1987 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 32 ▼



**How did *R-Type*'s distinctive design originate?**
We thought it would be hard to invoke a big scale atmosphere with a biological expression. This is why we settled on the biomechanical design. I also think by implanting machines into living things, the game became interesting.

**Where did the inspiration for the bosses come from?**
With regard to the design of Dobkeratops, the original model was actually one that our lead designer had since joining Irem, and was used without any changes. With the bosses we made a lot of effort to create unique characters – something that nobody had ever conceived, attacked or seen before.

**What can you tell us about the iconic Stage 3 boss?**
The ship was originally intended to be the final boss, and was designed as the 'moving base' of Bydo. We were keen to have players destroy the surface of this giant ship but at the same time we also wanted all players to enjoy this unique character, so the decision was made to bring it forward to Stage 3. I think Stage 5's boss, Bellmate, is the most interesting. It appears with so many masses of cells around it, which fly toward the player's ship one after another, and its attack pattern is unique. The player has to charge their shot to destroy it, and I also like the rhythm of its attack.

**How did you balance *R-Type*?**
Because the game was originally developed for the arcade, we made the balance of the difficulty considering the players' achievement – based on how far somebody could get on a single credit [100 yen]. We also paid close attention to the changes that occur between each stage. The colours and themes change rapidly rather than gradually.

**Tell us about the R-9 Fighter's design.**
In the beginning we considered a robot that could transform into a combat plane, but as the game developed, this idea gradually changed into the 'Force' and disappeared. At the early stage of the R-9's planning, we wanted the ship to shoot up and down as well as front to back. Initially, the ship could turn around and shoot backwards as it transformed into the robot, but the concept didn't work very well. It was then we realised that we could solve the problem using the 'Force'.

**What was the 'Force' inspired by?**
The 'Force' was inspired by the ball-rolling Dung Beetle. Initially, it could be added to the top and underbelly of the ship – not just back and front, but we found the concept difficult to use, so we removed it. We were seeing so many shoot-'em-ups appearing from other publishers, we wanted to incorporate a unique power-up system into our game. We spent a lot of time refining the specifications of the ship and the look of the enemies at the beginning of the game.

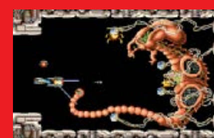
**Why do you think *R-Type* remains so popular?**
Some of the functions must've felt fresh. The control over the 'Force' might look difficult but it becomes interesting once you get used to using it. Maybe the fun of learning the formation of the attacks, the game's setting, creature designs, and so on helped. I think the reason why this game is appealing is because its uniqueness never gets old.



### HOW TO DEMOLISH R-TYPE'S FIRST BOSS



1 Ignore the eyes, as they are nothing but a cheap distraction.



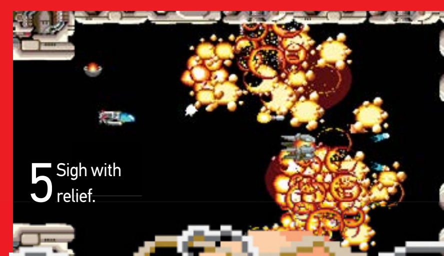
2 Focus all your firepower on the stomach and watch out for the small alien.



3 Detatch the 'Force' so it rests in the stomach for maximum damage.



4 If you take too long it'll move towards you. Resist the urge to panic and concentrate on that head.



5 Sigh with relief.



150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

# MARIO'S DEVELOPERS ON CREATING WORLD 1-1

## 40 Super Mario Bros.

■ Year: 1985 ■ Platform: NES ■ Previous position: 24 ▼

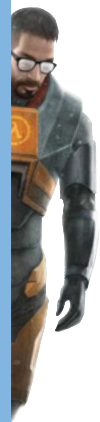
**World 1:1 does a great job of teaching the player what to fear and what to avoid. How much planning went into that design?**

**Takashi Tezuka:** I really think Miyamoto-san put a lot of thought into the first course. Even if you look at the draft documents as we drew it out we really simulated what a first-time player would do and experience. Emotionally too; if you saw a Goomba coming maybe they would want to jump onto the platform on top. So we really looked at the details and simulated the player's experience and thought process, designing the course based on that.

**Shigeru Miyamoto:** I don't want people to think that I'm a manipulator, necessarily, based on that comment. It's really about my intention of wanting players to really understand the game mechanic, so just on the first and second stages we want the player to fully understand the game and for the rest of it be able to generally enjoy the game. Even when our testing team was playing the game I would stand behind them to see if what I simulated or what I thought is happening or not.

**Takashi Tezuka:** Sometimes you forget what a first-time player experiences or goes through as you continue to design games. It's interesting to go back and refresh what it takes, because just the game control of using your left and right hands very differently in itself could be a new experience for a first-time game player. From that point of view it's really important and good to continue refreshing your memory of what that experience is.





# THE HARD FACTS OF (HALF)LIFE

## 39 Half-Life

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: PC
■ Previous position: 38 ▼

- Its opening intro of Gordon heading to work has been copied by countless other games.
- It's one of the first first-person shooters to tell its story through scripted sequences.
- Unlike other examples of the genre it throws in a surprising amount of puzzles for Gordon to tackle.
- Characters will continually help Gordon on his quest, adding to *Half-Life*'s atmospheric world.
- While Gordon can utilise numerous weapons, his reliance on a humble crowbar separates *Half-Life* from its peers.

# SHOOT THE CORE

## 38 Tomb Raider

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 19 ▼

Everything seemed aligned for the birth of Lara Croft. 3D gaming was an exciting new medium that developers were experimenting with, while media from all corners focused on *Tomb Raider*'s leading lady. While Core Design is no longer with us, the legacy it left with *Tomb Raider* is unquestionable. Lara's first adventure not only helped redefine the adventure genre, but also began a series of games that has spanned two decades. It's telling that even with the high acclaim that the reboots have received in recent years it's Lara's original quest that makes it into your final list.








# THREE STEPS TO RPG HEAVEN

## 37 Final Fantasy VI

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: SNES ■ Previous position: N/E

### KEFKA

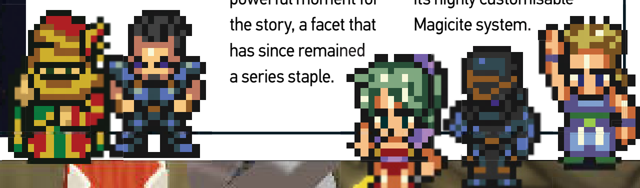
■ *Final Fantasy* games had always had villains, but none were quite as memorable as the cackling, almost-comical bad guy Kefka.

### A CHANGING WORLD

■ Halfway through the game is a dramatic scene that alters the layout of the world and acted as a powerful moment for the story, a facet that has since remained a series staple.

### DEEP CUSTOMISATION

■ One of the things fans love about *Final Fantasy* is its varied RPG systems, an element that *FFVI* displays beautifully with its highly customisable Magicite system.





179th - The Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess
405th The Legend Of Zelda: Oracle Of Seasons
391th The Legend Of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds
483th Zelda II: The Adventure Of Link
888th The Legend Of Zelda: Skyward Sword

# HOW LINK WENT FROM ZERO TO HYRULE HERO

## 36 The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker

■ Year: 2003 ■ Platform: GameCube ■ Previous position: N/E

### A CHEEKY CHAP

■ There's something about this youthful and cartoonish Link that just makes him all that more charming to play as. He's got a bit more of a naughtiness about him that you never really felt in the more mature *Zelda* games, perhaps making a bit more sense for him to destroy everyone's vases.

### HAVE SOME FUN!

■ As great as *Ocarina Of Time* and *Majora's Mask* are, they're just a tad too serious at times. *Wind Waker*, by comparison, was a much more jovial experience, with talking boats, friendly pirates and a more comfortable setting for comical – and, frankly, bizzare – character Tingle.

### WELCOME TO GAMECUBE

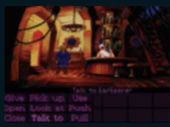
■ For many the, cel-shaded adventures of *Wind Waker* helped signal just what the GameCube was about. While the industry was onward towards a permanent, grit-infused shade of brown, *Wind Waker* proved there could still be fun in the industry.

### AGELESS ORIGINALITY

■ This aesthetic hadn't been popularised at this point, but more than anything it's helped make *Wind Waker* one of the few games of the era to withstand the test of time It means its originality can still shine through, even if you were to play it today.

## 35 Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge

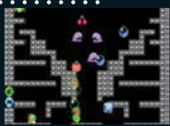
■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry



It takes skill to approach a sequel to one of the greatest adventures of all time *and* improve upon it, but with smoother interactions, greater production values and an even more humorous storyline *LeChuck's Revenge* managed just that.

## 34 Bubble Bobble

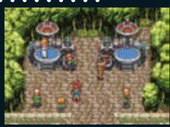
■ Year: 1986 ■ Platform: Arcade
■ Previous position: 12



*Bubble Bobble's* inclusion of a brilliant co-op mode is likely to be the reason why so many remember it so fondly. The game itself was utterly replayable – not least thanks to its multiple endings.

## 33 Chrono Trigger

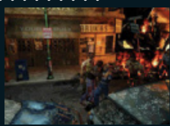
■ Year: 1995 ■ Platform: SNES
■ Previous position: New Entry



Riding the wave of *Final Fantasy* is one thing, but Square felt it needed to prove its status as king of RPGs. A fascinating, storyline, a unique combat system and a brilliant cast made *Chrono Trigger* truly stand out.

## 32 Resident Evil 2

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: PSone
■ Previous position: 97



While it might not be quite as breakthrough as the original, *Resi 2* took what made its predecessor so well-loved and improved on it. It's perhaps the perfect *Resi* experience, thanks to its amazing atmosphere and characters.

## 31 Grand Theft Auto V

■ Year: 2013 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry

While *GTA V* might not be as groundbreaking as *GTA III*, a vast world with an original three-character story makes it the definitive modern-day Rockstar game.



# MATTHEW SMITH'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT

## 30 Manic Miner

■ Year: 1983 ■ Platform: ZX Spectrum ■ Previous position: 3 ▼

**Retro Gamer** received flak in the past for going overboard with its coverage of the *Miner Willy* games. That criticism was probably warranted in the early issues, but as the latest survey results show, the games *are* hugely popular with readers. *Manic Miner* is the highest-charting Spectrum original, and is the third-placed 8-bit computer game overall behind *Elite* and *Tetris*. And, being released in 1983, it also happens to be the oldest game in the top 30.

It's not hard to see why the game retains its appeal after all these years. The initial impact was impressive at the time – imaginative and colourful sprites, in-game music and sound effects (on the Spectrum, no less) – but it's the perfect platforming challenge that has elevated the game to classic status. Many of its 20 caverns are exceptionally well-designed, and the game rewards dedicated players by saving the very best screens until late in the game. If you're one of those intrepid souls who's made it through to the final cavern and grabbed the cryptic items at the end then you'll know that the game's reputation is fully deserved. *Manic Miner* is Matthew Smith's masterwork and will always be one the greatest games of the 8-bit era.




» [ZX Spectrum] Certain screens were inspired by the popular arcade games Matt enjoyed at the time.

### DERRICK ROWSON

**Coder of Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy for the Amstrad CPC (with Steve Wetherill)**



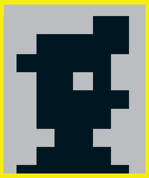
*Manic Miner* feels more complete than *Jet Set Willy*. You do a task and then progress. *Jet Set Willy*, on the other hand, allows several tasks to be bypassed and other routes to be taken. If I then attempt the missed task, and lose my lives, I feel it was a wasted journey. *Manic Miner* seems to teach skill as each level is passed. The more it is played the easier it becomes. *Jet Set Willy* somehow does not feel this way.

I never had access to Matthew's source code, but having someone else's code is sometimes not all that helpful. Matthew could code as the normal person talked. He used to challenge people to write code quicker than he did. I would bet that most of his code was written in one attempt – he would think of something then just write the code. No flowcharts, no bit-by-bit writing to test out his logic – just type it out and see if it worked. Which most of the time it did.




## CHRIS LANCASTER

### Coder of Manic Miner for the Commodore 64



Software Projects got in touch and discussed the possibility of me writing the C64 version of *Manic Miner*. I was in the Royal Air Force at the time, so any software development had to be done in my spare time, but Alan Maton was happy with that and bought me a Spectrum so I could see how *Manic Miner* played. Five and a half weeks of sleepless nights later and the C64 version was ready, just in time to get it into the shops for when they opened after Christmas.

To me, the simple gameplay of *Manic Miner* was the key to its success. It's a game that takes seconds to learn the controls to play it, but can provide hours of amusement. Programmatically, the basic game is not very complex, but Matthew did a really good job of getting half decent sound out of a Spectrum. The graphics were original and I particularly liked the large head of Eugene.

## ROY COATES

### Coder of Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy for the Dragon 32/64



Alan Maton from Software Projects showed me a Spectrum running *Manic Miner*. This was the first time I'd ever seen the game. He said, "We want you to write that – for the Dragon." The game looked so simple, I was sure that I could knock it out in a very short time. I was wrong. Three months of hard graft later it was done.

There's a certain something about *Manic Miner*. It seems to be both mysterious and familiar at the same time. Although we looked at every game we could get our hands on back then, none had the same charisma that *Manic Miner* had. I still love it today.

I did add some extra screens for my own amusement. I'd forgotten all about it until after the launch when Software Projects called me and gave me a good ticking-off for not telling them. They were pleased, of course, since it generated more publicity. It also allowed Dragon owners to gloat to their Spectrum-owning pals. For once, the Dragon had more.




» [ZX Spectrum] The Warehouse, with its unstable floors, was one of the trickiest rooms in the game.





Bethesda's *Fallout 3* was the second attempt at making it – the original version was scrapped in 2003 when Interplay closed Black Isle Studios.

# HOW WAR CHANGED

## 29 Fallout 3

■ Year: 2008 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

- Full-3D environments gave a vastly heightened sense of immersion, drawing players into the Capital Wasteland.
- High-profile voice acting from the likes of Liam Neeson, Ron Perlman and Malcolm McDowell lent the game a big-budget feel.
- A renewed focus on the story and the downplaying of self-referential humour kept the fourth wall firmly intact, in contrast to its predecessors.
- Bringing the game to consoles took the series from cult hit to mainstream success, bringing millions of additional players into the fold.
- Not everyone was thrilled with it – the game attracted controversy in Australia, India and Japan due to its themes and content.

**Sega Of America initially rejected *Sonic***
Despite having been designed to appeal to the West, Sega Of America initially branded *Sonic* as a complete disaster – in fact, it was so convinced that the project was unsalvageable that it contacted a designer to create a replacement character.

**It nearly ended up on home computers**
*Sonic*'s exclusivity was a key selling point for Sega consoles, but it nearly wasn't exclusive. US Gold announced that it had acquired the rights to convert *Sonic* to the C64, Spectrum, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST and Amiga, with news stories appearing in ACE and *C&VG*.

# THE SPEEDSTER'S MANY SECRETS

## 28 Sonic The Hedgehog

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Mega Drive ■ Previous position: 11 ▼

When *Sonic The Hedgehog* hit the Mega Drive, it looked and sounded like nothing else around – pop composer Masato Nakamura composed a catchy soundtrack and the graphics weren't just well-drawn, they shifted about at an incredible pace. Or at least, they could. Sonic was never just about speed, and some excellent level design challenged players to perform precision platforming as well the odd daredevil stunt. Coupled with an appealing hero, the game had all the tools to take the world by storm and did exactly that, transforming the Mega Drive from a worthy competitor into a mass-market success.

**Sonic didn't originally fight robots**
Early concepts featured Sonic fighting a more traditional-looking bunch of monsters. He also had a girlfriend named Madonna, but the damsel in distress concept was dropped pretty early on to differentiate the game from Mario and Princess Peach.

**The 'real' credits are hidden in the game**
The Team had to use pseudonyms, but there's a hidden screen with the team's real names. To see it, play the game on a Japanese Mega Drive and press C, C, C, C, C, C, Up, Down, Down, Down, Left, Right on the title screen. When the demo starts, hold A, B, C, and Down.

**Robotnik's wrecking ball got around**
It's well-known that the wrecking ball Robotnik uses in Green Hill Zone was originally a free-rolling hazard that could be pushed and even ridden, but there was also an unused swinging variant, which could take the place of the more beneficial swinging platforms and the code still exists.

**Sonic used to be in a band**
Sonic was the vocalist of this group, and he was joined by a rabbit a chicken and a crocodile. They were originally set to feature on the game's sound test screen, but were cut for time reasons – the free space was filled up with the iconic Sega sound effect instead.








# IGA ON HIS EPIC SYMPHONY

## 27 Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night

■ Year: 1997 ■ Platform: PSone ■ Previous position: New Entry



**On *Symphony Of The Night*'s appeal**
I wanted to change the impression that *Castlevania* was this difficult-to-access action game. When we decided to adopt RPG elements, we agreed that users should receive something good when beating enemies. So I thought of adding XP to the game. I thought that even the users who were not good at playing this type of action game would be able to clear *Symphony Of The Night* if I adopted this particular system.

**On creating Alucard**
I decided to choose a character that had a special link to the previous *Castlevania* titles. Personally, I liked Alucard very much and it was totally fine with me, but I presumed that those who had been fans for a long time would be angry with our decision since it was the first time the series ever had a non-whip-using character as a hero. Alucard was just a really cool hero, and that is why I think *Symphony Of The Night* has been received so favourably by the fans.

**On Symphony's music**
The music direction has never led the creation of the game. I have always asked Michiru [Yamane] to compose music in accordance with the actual game and never the other way around. She co-ordinated with the team and composed music from the image of the stages.

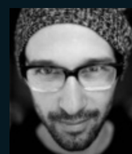
**On his favourite tune**
My favourite is *Castle Dracula* which starts to play when Alucard enters the castle for the first time. I was impressed with the way the music starts to play once Alucard enters the castle, and then suddenly the castle gets bright and zombies start to appear. It might be because that part was programmed by myself.



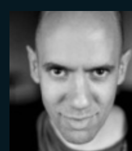

# NAUGHTY DOG GET REAL

## 26 The Last Of Us

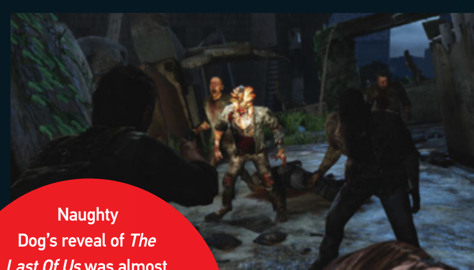
■ Year: 2013 ■ Platform: PS3
■ Previous position: New Entry



**Can you talk about why you decided to chose the over-the-shoulder perspective, and how it plays into interactive storytelling?**
**Ricky Cambier (lead designer):** Ok, so to talk about camera for a second – the difference between *The Last Of Us* camera versus the Uncharted camera is basically… well, in the Uncharted camera you're further back, you can see all of Nate. In *The Last Of Us*, though, you're *tight*, the camera is brought way in on Joel. You are up close, there's the sense that there's danger all around you. It's intimate. Dangerous. You know, every bullet *counts*.



***The Last Of Us* is noticeably devoid of unnatural exposition dumps and unrealistic dialogue. How do you avoid these common shortcomings?**
**Josh Scherr (writer):** It's important, for us, to have a compelling narrative that's delivered in a believable way. The characters have to come first. As long as you create compelling characters that have a convincing arc to the story, everything else can follow alongside that: gameplay, design and so on.



Naughty Dog's reveal of *The Last Of Us* was almost spoiled in *Uncharted 3*, as an in-game newspaper referenced the game's fungal infection theme. Players assumed it was another team, though!



# THE **POP CULTURE** REFERENCES THAT **DEFINED** ROCKSTAR'S **CLASSIC** GAME

## 25 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

■ Year: 2002 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 15 ▼

*Vice City* first made your list 11 years ago when it was still a contemporary game. Despite having only been on sale for two years, it appeared in your original top 20, proving that Rockstar's decision to set the game during the Eighties was a canny one that would resonate with a large number of gamers.

Of course, even without its Eighties nostalgia, *Vice City* would still be an entertaining game thanks to its interesting lead character, solid and varied missions and numerous subtle tweaks to the gameplay that had made *GTA III* so entertaining to play. 11 years on and the passion for it still burns stongly.




**SCARFACE**

■ The similarities between Tommy Vercetti and Tony Montana are many. They both rise to power using insane amounts of violence and have similar-looking mansions.




**RESERVOIR DOGS**

■ The most obvious connection is that Tommy Vercetti looks remarkably similar to Michael Madson's Mr Blonde.

**THE GODFATHER**

■ There are obvious parallels between Sonny Forelli and Santino 'Sonny' Corleone. In addition to having the same name, they both have the same mean temper and want to muscle in on the drug trade.

**CARLITO'S WAY**

■ Ken Rosenberg not only looks incredibly similar to David Kleinfield in *Carlito's Way*, but also has the same cocaine addiction and becomes increasingly incoherent and paranoid as the game continues.

**SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT**

■ Burt Reynold's character is very similar to the role he plays in the famous film and The Bandit itself also features in the game.

**MIAMI VICE**

■ Lots of references to the classic TV show. *Crockett's Theme* plays, Philip Michael Thomas plays Lance Vance and the titles are similar.



# WHY THE **SILENT CARTOGRAPHER** IS **AMAZING**

## 24 Halo: Combat Evolved

■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: Xbox
■ Previous position: 18 ▼



Bungie's game already impressed with its intelligent story, satisfying gunplay and detailed textures, but The Silent Cartographer took things to a whole new level. It starts off brilliantly with Master Chief receiving instructions as his ship passes over a frantic battle. Later you're in the thick of that very same fight, tackling Elites, watching the soldiers you just landed with fall, and doing your very best to get off that damned beach. It's a brilliant opening that only gets more intriguing as you dig into the Covenent base.

# **YOSHIO SAKAMOTO** ON **EXPLORATION**

## 23 Super Metroid

■ Year: 1994 ■ Platform: SNES
■ Previous position: 89 ▲



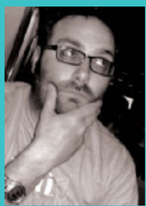
We really didn't want to explain things to the player using too many words. We wanted to let them play and work things out for themselves. For example, say there's a mechanism where you need to climb up a ladder and place a bomb there in order to advance, as one component in the solution of a [gameplay] riddle; if that was all you needed to do in order to get through to the next area, you'd miss all of the other mechanisms we'd put in place and wouldn't even realise that certain parts of the game existed. We wanted players to explore everything we'd made. That's why we designed the maps in a way that the player couldn't escape without exploration, or in such a way that the player would end up back at a starting point before advancing. The player would be cornered/driven and would be forced to stop and say, 'Right, how should I think about this area?' That's the essential point of the map design. The player had to 'feel' their way through the game. We wanted the player to feel that they had made that discovery independently.



# STEVE LYCETT FEELS THE WIND IN HIS HAIR!

## 22 Out Run

■ Year: 1986 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 44 ▲



**What's your first memory of *Out Run*?**
Putting 10p into a stand-up machine in Chapel St Leonards and the force feedback totally taking me by surprise. Pretty sure I got as far the split in the road, ran out of time, then instantly had another go to see if I could do better. I was hooked! Learning I could make the chicane at the end by shifting gears saw me through to the next stage and I felt like it was me in that shiny red Ferrari. I've been in love with the game ever since.

**Why do you think that it remains such an iconic game?**
It delivered really on so many fronts. Visually it was stunning and there is a real sense of speed, it sounded great, each car overtake feels like an achievement due to the roar they make as you drive past. The junctions are a masterstroke as it made you want to go and play again just to see where you could go, you'd not really had that freedom available before so it suddenly made its whole world feel more real. It wasn't a racing game either, it was a driving game where you were on real roads and the only opponent was the clock, which was fresh in itself.

**What's your favourite music track from the game and why?**
I've always learned towards *Splash Wave* as actual driving music, but honestly I think my favourite track is actually the map/highscore theme *Last Wave*. It's such a bookend to the drive that even if you don't make the end, you can look at the sunset in the background knowing you did your best! The gentle waves in the background just evoke seaside holidays too.

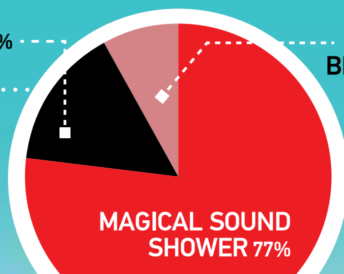
**Did you ask Sega if you could include it in your *OutRun 2* port?**
Sega insisted all the music was present, including *Last Wave*! I did suggest we use it for the XMB music before you went into game, just to set the right feel.

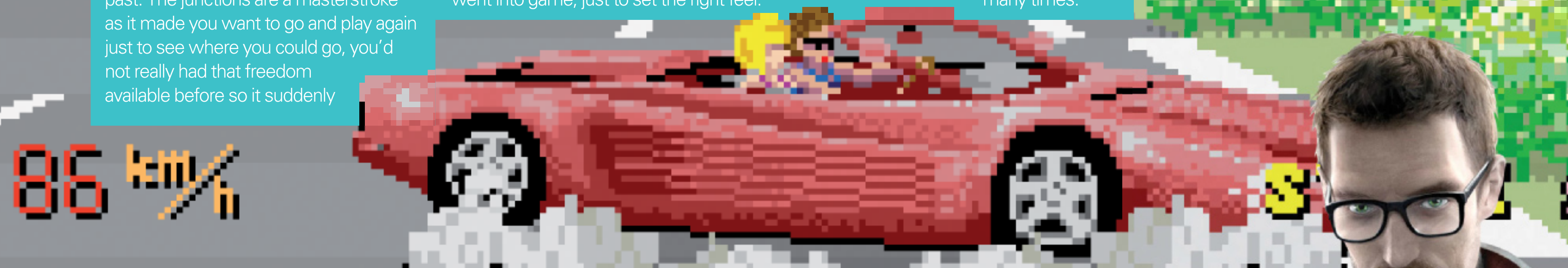
**What mechanics does it share with OutRun Coast 2 Coast?**
All of the driving remains very much the same between *OutRun 2* and *Coast 2 Coast*. The weight and handling was driven quite mathematically through some complex behaviours, plus the design was based on very specific curve radii. Sega nailed the feel in the original arcade game so it was very important we didn't adjust that too far as part of the experience is that perfect driving feel.

**If you could go on a road trip with Yu Suzuki where would you go?**
*OutRun 2 SP* was a love letter to America, I'd love to do the whole Route 66 with Yu Suzuki in an open top 512BB. *Splash Wave* blaring out of course!

**Would you like to make a new *OutRun* game?**
We'd absolutely love to go back and do a third game, we've suggested it to Sega many times.

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE OUTRUN TUNE?




# AN EPIC SPACE ADVENTURE

## 21 Elite

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: 1 ▼

Those who voted for *Elite* were less likely than the average voter to vote for games that made the top ten - with the sole exception of *Tetris*.

There's still a lot of love out there for the epic space combat and trading of *Elite* – it's an impressive performer, as only two Eighties titles and just one UK-developed game rank higher than Braben and Bells classic. However, the game was at the very top of **Retro Gamer**'s 2004 top 100 list, and narrowly missed the top 20 this time around. Why has it slid down the rankings? We have put it down to shifting demographics, particularly when it comes to our international audience and the influx of Nineties kids.




# GORDON'S ALIVE!

## 20 Half-Life 2

■ Year: 2004 ■ Platform: Various
■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

**5 YEARS** The game's development time

**96** The game's score on Metacritic

**12 MILLION+** Number of copies sold

**EVERYONE** The people blown away by the Gravity Gun

**$40 MILLION** The game's budget



## BEST SWORD-FIGHTING INSULTS

You fight like a dairy farmer!

How appropriate! You fight like a cow!

Soon you'll be wearing my sword like a shish kebab!

First you better stop waving it about like a feather duster.

There are no words for how disgusting you are.

Yes there are. You just never learned them.



# TALK TO… RON GILBERT

## 19 The Secret of Monkey Island

■ Year: 1990 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 33 ▲



**So what made you want to make an adventure game about pirates?**

At the time fantasy adventures, such as *King's Quest,* were very popular, but because I've never been much of a fantasy fan myself. I wanted to do something different, something more based on reality. Although the pirates in *Monkey Island* aren't really the slimy 17th century bandits of the high seas that they were, they're more a mix of swashbuckling Errol Flynn movies and the Disneyland Pirates Of The Caribbean theme park ride. That was one of my favourite rides at Disneyland as a kid, getting on that little boat and being taken on your own pirate adventure, but I always also wanted to get off the boat and wander around those big pirate ships and interact with the characters. But, to me, making *Monkey Island* wasn't actually about making a realistic pirate game, it was about making a game that played on all the clichés of movies such as *Treasure Island* and *Captain Blood*.

**One of the things that made the games great were the memorable characters like the bumbling Guybrush Threepwood, the undead pirate LeChuck, Governor Marley, and, our favourite, Stan the Used-Ship Salesman. Was it fun fleshing these characters out for players?**

Well, at the time, a lot of computer game characters were like cardboard cut-outs that spoke in weird half-sentences because they were just doling out information to you as the player. We wanted characters that you could get to know and understand, and that's just down to good writing. Where Stan came from was that during the [production of the] first *Monkey Island* I bought a car. And I remember going to the car dealer and he wouldn't let me leave!

**How did the idea for insult sword-fighting originate?**

I watched lots of old pirate movies for the first *Monkey Island*, and one thing that stood out was that while they were fighting they always taunted each other with insults. I knew we needed sword-fighting in a game about pirates but because I didn't want to introduce any action gameplay the old movies provided the perfect solution.

Nobody's ever drawn blood from me and nobody ever will.

You run THAT fast?

Only once have I met such a coward!

He must have taught you everything you know.

I got this scar on my face during a mighty struggle!

I hope now you've learned to stop picking your nose.



You're no match for my brains, you poor fool.

I'd be in real trouble if you ever used them.

You are a pain in the backside, sir!

Your haemorrhoids are flaring up again, eh?

**How useful was the experience of developing *Monkey Island* for your future adventure videogame projects like *The Cave* and your upcoming adventure, *Thimbleweed Park*? What is it like slipping back into that style of game?**

*Monkey Island* was the first game where I felt I had once-and-for-all figured out what an adventure game should be. I learned a lot on those games, and still use a lot of the same game design and puzzle construction methods today. If you look at the puzzle structure of *Monkey Island* and the puzzle structure of something like *The Cave* they share a lot in common. And with *Thimbleweed Park* we are definitely trying to capture a lot of the charm and sensibilities of the old LucasArts games…

**How do you feel about the fact that the first two *Monkey Island* games are still remembered and rated so highly by Retro Gamer readers after all these years?**

It's very humbling. There are two things in my career that I'm most proud of. *Monkey Island* is one of them and Humongous Entertainment is the other. It's amazing for me to hear what those games meant to people and to realise I was a part of that. And that people that weren't even born when the games originally came out are discovering them through the *Special Edition* versions on their consoles or mobile devices. I never would have believed it back then… People tell me that they learned English or how to read from playing *Monkey Island*. People have had *Monkey Island* weddings. Two people have asked me if it was OK to name their new child Guybrush. It warms my grumpy heart. But not too much, I'm still grumpy.




» [PC] LeChuck ominously anchors his ghost ship in a river of lava – as if ghost ships weren't frightening enough…




» [PC] Meeting and fighting the Sword Master is just one of the memorable moments from *Monkey Island*.




# WHY SEGA'S **SEQUEL RULES**

## 18 Streets Of Rage II

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: Mega Drive ■ Previous position: 64 ▲

- The addition of new characters Max and Skate gave options for players who wanted extreme strength or unsurpassed speed.
- Every character boasted new unique special moves, allowing them to clear out crowds of enemies while inflicting major damage.
- Bigger sprites and better animation pushed the Mega Drive, bringing the look and feel of coin-op beat-'em-ups into the home.
- Yuzo Koshiro delivered another round of pulse-pounding dance tracks, somehow managing to top the excellent soundtrack of the original game.
- More varied enemy attack patterns included motorcycle assaults, spectators jumping in from the background and strikes from above.




**1,965**
Yu Suzuki's forklift tweet prior to the announcement of *Shenmue 3.*
**1,571**

# **RYO** GOES TO **HONG KONG**

## 16 Shenmue II

■ Year: 2001 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 66 ▲

They say calm comes before a storm, and *Shenmue*'s sedate pace gave way to a Hong Kong-based sequel which saw Ryo engage in much more dangerous situations. From chasing down thieves to being chased by a chainsaw-wielding maniac, this chapter of the quest for revenge against Lan Di involved much more fighting. If that doesn't appeal, you can still drop by the arcade and even race some ducks.



# BETHESDA'S **PETE HINES** ON A **MODERN CLASSIC**

## 17 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

■ Year: 2011 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆



**How does it feel knowing our readers consider *Skyrim* as much a classic game as *Pac-Man, Super Mario World* and *Elite?***
I think it's a pretty great tribute to the team at Bethesda Game Studios that it created something people feel so strongly about, to be included amongst some of the most iconic, important games in videogame history.

**Why do you think our readers consider *Skyrim* to be one of the greatest games of all time?**
I would guess different people might have different reasons, but that's part of what (I think) makes *Skyrim* great: it's a game you can make your own. You're telling your own story of who you want to be, and what you want to do, and the game allows that to happen in so many different ways. It's the combination of shared experiences and experiencing things that your friends have never seen or done in the game. I am glad so many people have enjoyed it so much.

### THE FINAL VOTES

**42.61%** - Skyrim
**15.22%** - Oblivion
**11.16%** - Morrowind
**1.1%** - Daggerfall
**0%** - Arena



*Skyrim* is one of just 11 games released in this decade to make your top 150 games of all time.




# KONAMI'S **STEALTHY SUCCESS**

## 15 Metal Gear Solid

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: PSone ■ Previous position: 70 ▲

Many games have imitated *Metal Gear Solid*'s obvious qualities – its focus on cinematic storytelling, its expertly-crafted stealth-based gameplay and its bizarre sense of humour. However, the reason that it's so high on your list is that there's arguably not been a game as inventive since. Your memory card, your control pad, your knowledge of real-life TV sets and even the game's packaging were utilised in imaginative ways to enhance the game experience. Lots of games are clever, but Hideo Kojima's 3D debut was –and is – a work of creative genius that proved to be years ahead of the competition.



**15th** - Metal Gear Solid
**97th** - Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
**335th** - Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots
**430th** - Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty
**500th** - Metal Gear
**749th** - Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker

# **SONIC RETRO'S** COURTNEY GRIMES ON A **STUNNING SEQUEL**

## 14 Sonic the Hedgehog 2

■ Year: 1992 ■ Platform: Mega Drive ■ Previous position: 42 ▲






**When did you first encounter *Sonic 2*, and what did you make of it?**

Like lots of folks, I first encountered *Sonic 2* in Christmas 1992. I remember poring over the tome-like holiday guides put out by *Electronic Gaming Monthly* and *GamePro*, marking up the department store catalogues that showed Sega games and desperately hoping my parents wouldn't screw up and accidentally buy something for our Super Nintendo or Master System. Come Christmas morning, I start unwrapping gifts and the first box I open is an extra Genesis controller—so naturally with kid logic, I start crying because my parents messed up. Needless to say, by the end I spent the entire day up until the wee hours playing through to Metropolis Zone, racing my family in two-player mode and loving every minute.

**Why do you think *Sonic 2* is the most popular game in the series?**

It's important to remember that *Sonic 2* was a triple-A game before the concept of triple-A games





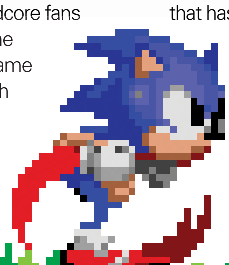

really existed. We struggle now to retroactively figure out Western release dates around that time, but everyone knows *Sonic 2*'s day. Promotion for the game saturated every part of Nineties kid culture: features on Nickelodeon, articles in children's magazines, crazy and creative commercials that ran during kids and teens' programming – it became a cultural event of its own, and it was something that even kids who weren't that interested in video gaming knew about and got excited for.

The scale of creative force that was applied to the development of *Sonic 2* was unparalleled at the time. Having two teams be in two different parts of the world collaborating to make a game at a time when most development teams ranged from four to eight people was like nothing seen before. The amount of finesse that went into the art has provided some of the deepest influences to not only *Sonic* games but platformers at large; Masato Nakamura's soundtrack set the standard for what music in games should sound like. When you look at games from 1992 – *Chiki Chiki Boys, Kid Chameleon, Rolo To The Rescue* – *Sonic 2* looks and feels light years ahead.

**What makes *Sonic 2* stand out for hardcore *Sonic* fans?**

*Sonic 2* stands out for hardcore fans for a few main reasons: one obviously being that the game had the widest impact with sales of nearly 6 million copies of the game, so there's a lot of popular nostalgia there. *Sonic 2*'s emphasis on linear, branching paths also encouraged a thriving community of tool-assisted speedruns and glitch discoveries – what better game to compete with on time than with a character who's gotta go fast?

The ambition that came with *Sonic 2* also left us with a lot of cultural detritus that has been a rich vein to mine – learning about scrapped zones, interviewing developer and using the leftover pieces to become game creators finishing these bits and bobs into full-blown zones!

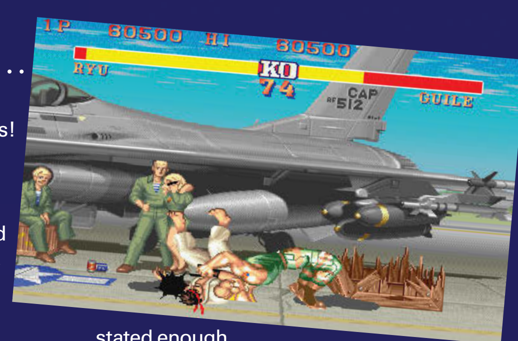


150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!




# STREET FIGHTER V PRODUCER **PETER ROSAS** ON **CAPCOMS SEMINAL BRAWLER**

## 13 Street Fighter II ■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: Arcade ■ Previous position: 27 ▲





**What are your earliest memories of *Street Fighter II*?**

My earliest memory was walking home from elementary school and stopping by the local bowling alley right after they got *Street Fighter II*. I just remember seeing this large crowd of teens huddled around this one machine and wondering what it was they were watching. When I finally got close enough to see the screen, I was blown away by the graphics at the time.

Another exciting memory was when I first saw players landing Guile's sonic boom combos. Seeing his moves cancel into special moves totally changed how I approached other characters, as it showed there was more to the game than I thought.

**Why do you think *Street Fighter II* remains so popular with gamers?**

I think there are quite a few factors as to why *Street Fighter II* remains so popular to this day. I could go on and on about the various reasons, but instead I will concentrate on two: iconic character design and music.

You have these iconic characters, whose design and fighting styles are caricatures of the country they represent. Although they seem outlandish, I think that in the back of everyone's mind they could actually visualise a one-eyed kickboxer in Thailand, or an enlisted soldier who fights out of the US kicking ass.

Another big reason is definitely the music. Just about every character theme in *Street Fighter II* not only fits the character, but also the stages in where the fighters do battle. The music also helps raise the tension of the battle with the songs speeding up towards the end of each round.

**Who do you consider the best character and why?**

I think the best character is Guile. He has great damage output, long range attacks and the best projectile recovery in the game. He also has the coolest looking combos!



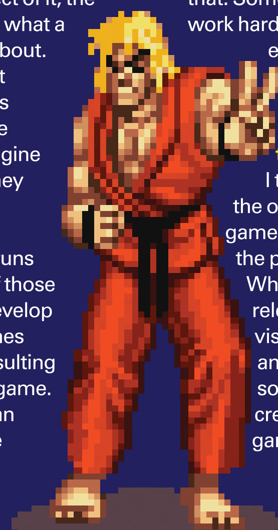
**What makes a great competitive fighting game?**

The elements that make a good fighting game are accessibility, depth, and balance.

Accessibility is important, as you want more people to be able to play the game and actually understand why they're winning or losing. The faster players can figure out the game system and move on to the competitive aspect of it, the faster they can enjoy what a fighting game is all about.

Depth is important because once players understand the game they'll explore the engine to see what tactics they can devise to defeat opponents. If the gameplay is rigid, it runs the risk of turning off those who aren't able to develop tactics against the ones they're losing to – resulting in them quitting the game.

Lastly, balance is an element that can't be stated enough. Players like to feel that regardless of what character they use they always have a chance at winning. A properly balanced game allows for that. Some characters may have to work harder than others, but at the end of the day, that work is rewarded with a victory.



**How critical is the music to the game?**

I think it's pretty critical to the overall experience of the game, as it can really immerse the player into the game world. When *Street Fighter II* was released, it had amazing visuals, innovative character and battle design - as well as some of the best music ever created for not only fighting games, but games in general.




# RETRO GAMER'S KARTING HEROES

## 12 Super Mario Kart

■ Year: 1992 ■ Platform: SNES ■ Previous position: 13 ▲



We're not surprised to see *Super Mario Kart* chart so highly (although three *Mario Karts* in the top 150 feels a little excessive). It was one of the first games from Nintendo that proved Mario had true crossover appeal, but it was also an excellent racer in its own right. Even today *Super Mario Kart* is amazing fun to play, particularly when having time trial competitions with friends, a mode responsible for many missed deadlines during our university days. The track design throughout is excellent, there's good variety between the eight playable characters and the three difficulty modes ensure plenty of replay value. Oh, and it pretty much setup the entire kart racing sub genre, too. All hail *Mario Kart*.



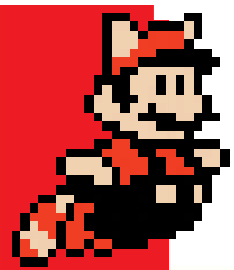
**DARRAN JONES**
Editor
■ I choose Mario. It's partly because he's a balanced character and the star of the show, but it's also because I'm lazy and he's the first racer that's selectable.

**JONATHAN WELLS**
Art Editor
■ Koopa Troopa all the way, he always seemed like one of the more balanced characters but with an added speed boost. He's still my go-to character!

**NICK THORPE**
Senior Staff Writer
■ My allegiance lies with Yoshi – he's great at recovering from hits thanks to his excellent acceleration, and his top speed isn't as woeful as that of the lightweight characters.

**DREW SLEEP**
Production Editor
■ Given the fact that Mushrooms give you a boost the fungus-clad Toad is synonymous with speed, and I'm all about speed. He's also rather adorable, and equally as idiotic.

# GAMES™'S JON GORDON ON A NES CLASSIC



## 11 Super Mario Bros 3

■ Year: 1988 ■ Platform: NES ■ Previous position: 36 ▲

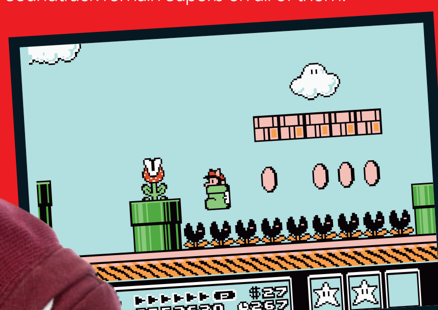


**What's your earliest memory of *SMB3*?**
Probably getting the game for Christmas and spending several hours, still in my pajamas, playing through the opening levels. The vibrant colour of the game compared to the original was amazing. Plus getting the Super Leaf and flying for the first time was mind-blowing.

**Why was it an important platformer?**
It was perfectly balanced from start to finish. As with any Miyamoto release it teaches players effortlessly what the rules of the game are as you progress. It was juggling so many new mechanics, but it instantly felt familiar and tighter than anything else before.

**How did it influence later *Mario* games?**
Well, it established the *Mario* costume mechanic, with the Tanooki and Frog suits, which has gone on to pretty insane levels in recent years. And we wouldn't have had the amazing cape mechanics of *Super Mario World* without it either.

**What level/world defines the game for you?**
That's tough. The first level (World 5-3) with the Kuribo shoe is a big one for me personally. It's one of my favourite *Mario* power-ups. The Airship levels stand out though. The forced scrolling, barrage of cannon and Bullet Bill fire and imposing soundtrack remain superb on all of them.





# DAVID DOAK PICKS UP THE GOLDEN GUN

## 10 GoldenEye 007

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: N64 ■ Previous position: 26 ▲



**What was your role on *GoldenEye*?**
The majority of my input was setting up the single player levels, turning story into game. I really enjoyed the challenge of getting the main NPC characters to work. Their behaviour and AI may seem dated now but at the time I think all of the non-combat stuff was very innovative. I did write some very shoddy code to run the in-game watch menu, although I'm sure Martin Hollis used to fix it when I wasn't looking.

**Why do you think it's so fondly remembered?**
A lot of things came together. It looked and sounded great and was state of the art on the N64. The core gameplay was well implemented and enhanced by game engine features like location based hits, dynamic props, explosions, sniping… and hats! Single-player transformed what features people expected from an FPS. It had a variety of story themed objectives, interesting AI, stealth based elements and all of this added to the feeling of being Bond. Then there was multiplayer. At the time, you couldn't really play competitive FPSs without PCs and a LAN but *GoldenEye* put it right in your front room.

**Would you ever play as Oddjob in a deathmatch?**
Multiplayer Oddjob is a crutch for the incompetent. I think if you choose him you are making a fairly clear personal statement.






# HOW CAPCOM'S FOURTH RESI REIGNITED A GENRE

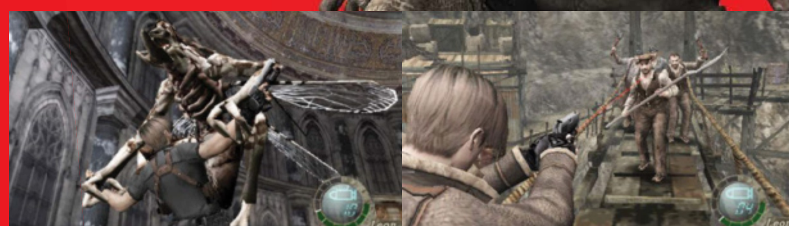
## 9 Resident Evil 4

■ Year: 2005 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

Turn to page 100 for our full making of feature on Resident Evil 4!

- The over-the-shoulder perspective hits the sweet spot between the cinematics of a fixed camera and the immersion of an FPS.
- Laser-sighted gunshots are damn handy for really hitting the shambling hordes where it hurts.
- Those violent villagers really don't take to strangers – look how they work together to make your life hell.
- When it comes to boss battles, these really are epic. Del Lago put us off swimming forever.
- Buying and selling items is key, though why does the merchant never remember us? Shouldn't we have a loyalty card?





# JON ROMERO REVISTS ID'S GAME-CHANGING FPS

## 8 DOOM

■ Year: 1993 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 9 ▲



**Is *Doom* the best game you've been involved in?**
Yes, definitely. It was the right game at the right time and it was a lot of fun to create. As a company, *Doom* was where we really hit our stride. Even though it wasn't Tom Hall's cup of tea, everyone else was really into it. John Carmack pushed the industry forward technically with BSPs, multiplayer mode and the diminished-lighting 2.5D engine. Adrian Carmack and Kevin Cloud created an amazing array of iconic art and Bobby Prince made a great soundtrack. When we finished the game we just didn't want to see it again for a while but only two weeks later we were as addicted to it as anyone else!

**Why do you think the game is so well-loved?**
It still feels great from a player control perspective. The enemies are well-balanced in regards to the control afforded to the player and the level design and sound effects create an ominous atmosphere. Even though modern day FPS design has progressed, these elements still make a fun game. It's timeless in that respect.

**Which is your weapon of choice when playing *Doom*?**
The Double-Barreled Shotgun. Second choice is the Rocket Launcher.






If you can get a character's HP to exactly 7,777 in battle, they'll perform a huge 64-hit attack in which each hit deals 7,777 damage.

### ANGST

■ You know how every Japanese RPG seems to have a brooding, angsty hero? That's Cloud's fault. Having said that, if you were forced to watch the life slip from the bodies of your loved ones, you'd probably be a bit miserable too.

### AMNESIA

■ Another classic Japanese RPG trope, here – although in Cloud's case it's not quite the case. See, he's got memories. It's just that you're never quite sure which parts of his life story aren't exactly true, and neither is he…

### BUSTER SWORD

■ If you're going to have a big, cool sword, why not have the biggest, coolest sword that your Gil can buy? Cloud subscribes to this philosophy, which is why he carries this absolutely enormous wedge of a weapon.

### PRETTY BOY

■ Not only is Cloud a hit with the ladies, earning the affections of both Tifa and Aeris as well as other characters, he's capable of outdoing the ladies when he crossdresses his way into a 'meeting' with Don Corneo.

### QUESTFOR VENGEANCE

■ Sure, Cloud's issues with Sephiroth do stretch into the scale of planetary jeopardy, but let's not forget that more than anything else, he's avenging the murders of his mother and his love interest.

# SEVEN FOR VII'S ULTIMATE HERO

## 7 Final Fantasy VII

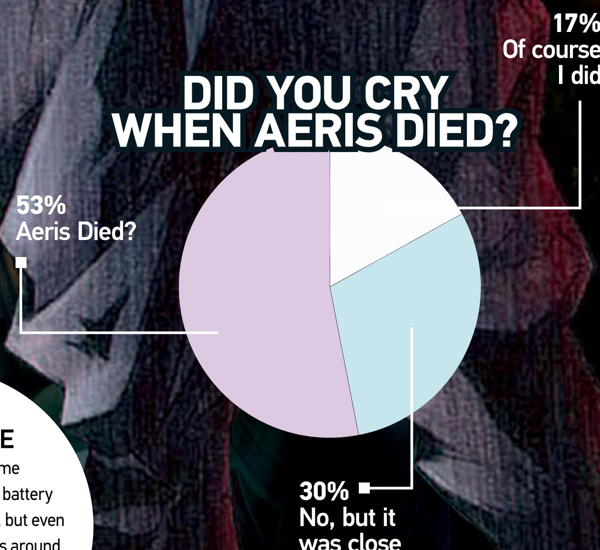
■ Year: 1997 ■ Platform: PlayStation ■ Previous position: 4 ▼

They say that you never forget your first, and *Final Fantasy VII* was the game that introduced a whole generation of Western players to Japanese RPGs. It didn't just do that though – it gave the whole genre a much-needed makeover. The genre had long had a reputation for underwhelming visuals and cookie-cutter 'knights and dragons' settings. *Final Fantasy VII* carried a modern style and exhibited an extraordinary cinematic flair, distancing it from the games that had gone before it, while backing that up with a flexible battle system, an emotional storyline and an quest that takes dozens of hours to beat.

### CHOSEN ONE

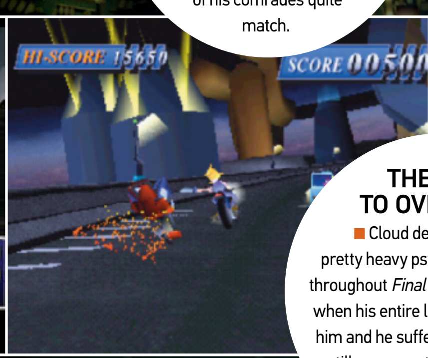
■ While Cloud isn't half-dragon or the last member of some ancient and powerful race, he *is* the product of experimentation that has turned him into a formidable combatant, in a way that none of his comrades quite match.

## DID YOU CRY WHEN AERIS DIED?










### THE WILL TO OVERCOME

■ Cloud deals with some pretty heavy psychological battery throughout *Final Fantasy VII*, but even when his entire life crumbles around him and he suffers a breakdown, he still manages to eventually piece things back together and struggle on.

# COLLECTOR **CHERYL GOACHER** ON HER **LOVE** OF **HYRULE**

## 6 The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past

■ Year: 1991 ■ Platform: SNES ■ Previous position: 16 ☆




**What is it you like about the *Zelda* series?**
That's a tricky one. I guess it's that feeling of exploration and adventure that lured me in. I also enjoy the selection of almost fairy-tale-esque characters in the series. I guess that sums it up well; it feels like a series of interactive fairy-tales.

**How long have you been collecting *Zelda* merchandise?**
It was around the late-Nineties that I started seriously collecting *Zelda* merchandise, so over 15 years now. While I've not been able to get everything I've wanted or found for various reasons (space, money, availability, etc.), I'm proud of what I've managed to get my hands on during this time.

**What's your earliest memory of *A Link To The Past*?**
When my family took myself and my brother to get our SNES, the game I actually chose was *Super Mario All-Stars*! It was thanks to my Dad selecting *A Link To The Past* among his choices that I was able to experience it. I remember studying the instructions and map of Hyrule, reading up on the backstory and becoming engrossed in this world, even before playing the game! Once I started playing, I found it to be as magical as I'd envisioned after brushing up on Hylian lore.

**Why do you think *A Link To The Past* is considered the best 2D *Zelda* game?**
*A Link To The Past* not only provided the template that certain future titles would follow, but it did so with a real fantasy, swords-and-sorcery atmosphere that later games struggled to match. Oh, and it's the only *Zelda* game so far to feature a pink-haired Link!

**How did it improve on the earlier *Zelda* games?**
Aside from the aforementioned 'swords-and-sorcery' atmosphere, the power of the SNES allowed the Light and Dark Worlds – and their populations – to appear more alive. This is especially true given the myriad characters and enemies you come across.

**Which bosses stand out in *A Link To The Past*?**
Avoiding the obvious Ganon/Agahnim answer, the Helmasaur King comes to mind immediately for some reason. Probably because of how imposing it looks, plus you have to kill it by smacking its head with the hammer, which is always fun! Moldorm also stands out, but for the wrong reasons; it's a real nuisance to defeat if you're not careful!



**What's the best weapon in the game and why?**
The Golden Sword. It turns cute little Link into a death machine, especially when using the Pegasus Boots for ultimate sword-ramming power!

**What's the best moment in the game and why?**
Strangely, I like a lot of the little moments as well as the big ones, such as when Link does a little spin and holds his sword aloft after finishing a dungeon, or – rather morbidly – his Game Over animation, which still holds more charm than other 2D *Zelda* games that employ the same sort of animation.



Apparently this was the exact face Darran pulled when he played Super Mario 64 for the first time…



# A **GAME** WITH **DEPTH**

## 5 Super Mario 64

■ Year: 1996 ■ Platform: N64 ■ Previous position: 17 ▲

The transition from 2D game design to 3D wasn't easy on many developers. From *Lemmings* and *Street Fighter* to *Sonic* and so many others, awkward transitions to the third dimension were a mainstay of Nineties gaming. But if you were a Nintendo fan, you probably didn't notice that. When everyone else was struggling to find their feet, Nintendo strode confidently into a new generation to show other developers how it was done. *Super Mario 64* wasn't just a good game or even a great game, it was a masterpiece of 3D platform game design that went unsurpassed for a whole generation.

Instead of trying to directly port the largely linear stages that worked in 2D Mario, Nintendo designed the game around open 3D spaces with no fixed end point. Each stage offers a variety of objectives to ensure that players explore every nook and cranny, from battles and coin hunts to races and puzzles. The game is packed with memorable moments, from little touches like jumping into rippling paintings to big set-pieces like swimming with the manta ray. There are no rose-tinted glasses here – *Super Mario 64* is the essence of its genre, distilled into a single game.

# PUZZLE PERFECTION

## 4 Tetris

■ Year: 1984 ■ Platform: Various ■ Previous position: 14 ▲

No game is quite so ubiquitous as *Tetris*. Just about every format has a version, official or otherwise. You might have been feeding your Game Boy batteries to keep playing, but you might have bought one of the 100 million copies sold on mobile phones, or mastered *Tetris: The Grand Master 3* in an arcade, or even hunted down *V-Tetris* for the Virtual Boy. It's a game that unites gamers of every experience level and every format.

Of course, it wouldn't be so high if it weren't so good. *Tetris* is the kind of game that gets its hooks into you – the compulsive nature of sorting shapes and eliminating lines means that a one game can turn into an all-night session. You can *easily* beat your score and you're *sure* that last game over was a freak accident. There are prettier games than *Tetris*, as well as more complex games and games that will leave a lasting emotional impact. But are there any games which inspire more addiction than *Tetris*? We don't think so.

### BY THE NUMBERS

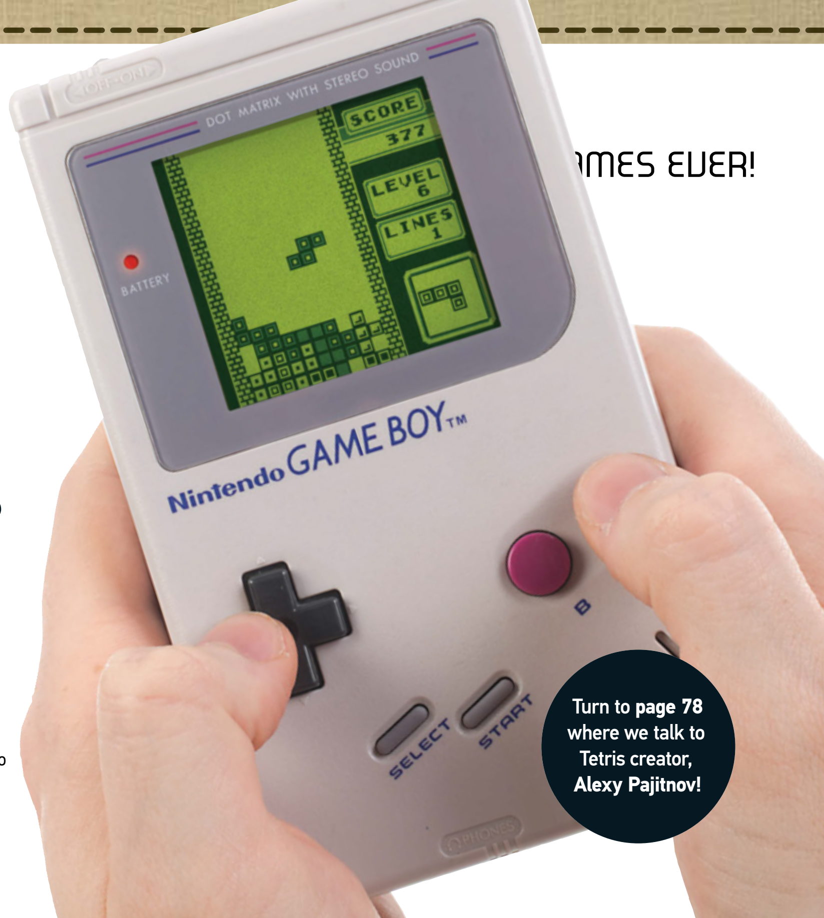
**170 MILLION:** The last cumulative sales total given for the *Tetris* series.

**35 MILLION:** How many of those were Game Boy *Tetris*.

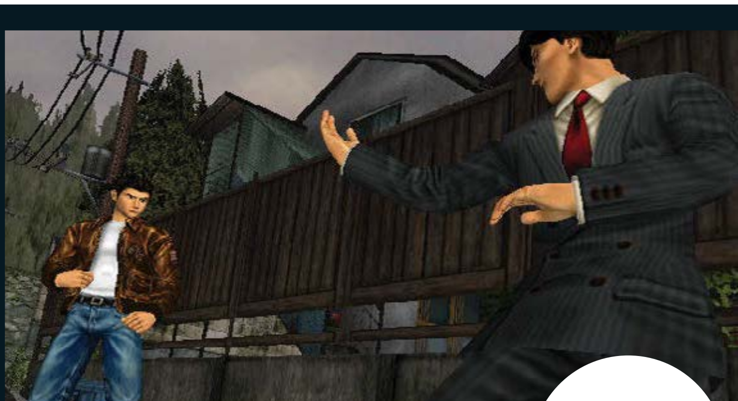
**748,757:** Twin Galaxies' record points, scored by Uli Horner on Game Boy *Tetris*.

**6**: Number of times Portland Retro Gaming Expo has held Classic Tetris World Championship.

**5:** Number of times Jonas Neubauer has won Classic Tetris World Championship.




Turn to **page 78** where we talk to Tetris creator, **Alexy Pajitnov!**






Flick through to **page 96** where we have a chat with **Yu Suzuki** himself!

# THE WORLD SIMULATOR

## 3 Shenmue

■ Year: 1999 ■ Platform: Dreamcast ■ Previous position: New Entry ☆

There's never been a game quite as ambitious as *Shenmue*. Yu Suzuki envisioned a mixed-genre epic combining exploration and investigation with fighting, racing and all manner of minigames. *Shenmue* was to be a game in which you could talk to anyone, visit any shop you wanted and even use any vending machine. What's amazing how comprehensively that vision was delivered – though as the world's most expensive videogame development, it had to deliver.

Because *Shenmue* is so grounded in real life, it doesn't have the typical flow of a videogame. If you're meeting someone at a certain time, you will have to occupy yourself while you wait, and you'll spend far more time chasing down leads than getting into scraps – just like you would in your day-to-day life, right? It's a game that moves at a sedate pace – one which allows some players to appreciate the detailed world in full, but strikes others as ponderous.

Ryo Hazuki's quest for revenge isn't universally appealing, but the players that love it do so with a burning passion because no game – and we're including the sequel here – is quite like *Shenmue*.

### Q&A: SHENMUE DOJO'S GEORGE MELITA



**When did you first encounter *Shenmue*?**
I first heard of the game when it was rumoured to be *Virtua Fighter* RPG. I eventually saw some promotional CG art and eventually *Project Berkley*. At the time, the realistic and somewhat grounded approach set itself apart from many other games, so it was something I wanted to try.

**What are the qualities that set *Shenmue* apart from others?**
Attention to detail. *Shenmue* can make an alleyway feel more alive than some game worlds. This coupled with the perfect sense of scale and fantastic pacing helps the player appreciate their surroundings. The setting has an charm, while the journey is seemingly endless and gruelling.

**Despite the fact that *Shenmue* was absent for so long, fans have remained extremely passionate about the series. Why does it command such loyalty?**
*Shenmue* commands the player to have a very personal connection with the games characters, surroundings and story. This is unique even by today's standards, though to have such an in depth title in 1999 was unheard of. The series' impact coupled with one of gaming's greatest cliffhangers of all time makes it tough to let go of.

# GRAPHIC ARTIST **MARK R. JONES** ON LINK'S **GREATEST ADVENTURE**

## 2 The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time

■ Year: 1998 ■ Platform: N64 ■ Previous position: 5 ▲

It's quite unsurprising that all of you have voted *Ocarina Of Time* as one of the best games ever made, as even now, nearly 20 years after release, it still possesses so many qualities that have guaranteed its legacy. It's true, even, that a vast array of recent games owe a debt to Nintendo's 1998 masterpiece – highly-acclaimed modern games like *Dark Souls* riff heavily off of the environments, dungeon design, boss fights and real-time combat that Eiji Aonuma and his team developed so remarkably for *Ocarina Of Time*, adapting the well-honed *Zelda* formula for a new generation of players.



**Tell us about your first encounter with *Ocarina Of Time*.**

I was a regular reader of *N64* magazine and I'd been particularly impressed with all the previews and screenshots that they'd been printing for, seemingly, at least 18 months before the game came out. I seem to remember the game was very delayed, so our appetites had been whetted for a good long time before we got to sample the game itself. I think someone had mentioned this game was the next release for the N64 that was going to take it all to the 'next level'. *Super Mario 64* had upped the level when that was released in 1996, then *Banjo-Kazooie* did the same in July 1998 (in my opinion) that had improved on the details that were on display graphics wise, as well as expanding on what you could do in this world contained inside your N64. You had detailed background graphics with virtually no 'fogging' in *Banjo-Kazooie*. Now, *Ocarina* was upping it again. So I was looking forward to getting myself a copy as I enjoyed the other titles. I don't remember doing anything like queuing up outside the shop for a copy but I did get one quickly. Luckily I was working in a record shop in town and only had a few shops to walk past until I got to the local N64 stockist.

**What do you feel the games strengths are?**

The major one for me was the combat system that made it really,







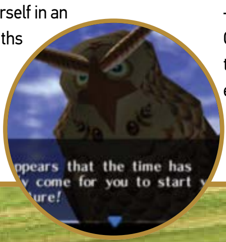




## THE BEST MOMENTS FROM OCARINA OF TIME

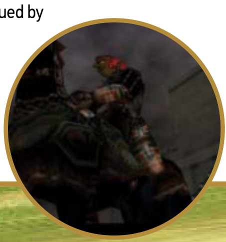
### FINDING HYRULE FIELD

■ Much like the *Elder Scrolls* games, *Ocarina* opens in a self-contained area, Kokiri Forest, before letting you loose on its world. Once you've ventured inside the Deku Tree, you leave the forest to find yourself in an area with loads of paths to explore – in 1998 this was the most impressive game world out there.



### THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

■ You approach Hyrule Castle only to see Zelda legging it out of there with her handmaiden. After she's lobbed the Ocarina Of Time into the moat, you find out why she's in such a hurry – she's being pursued by Ganondorf. This is the first time you encounter him, and it's quite memorable.



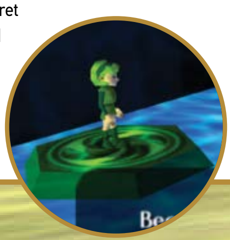
### COMING OF AGE

■ Time travel mechanics were popularised by *Ocarina*'s sequel, *Majora's Mask*, but they did feature as an important story beat here. When you arrive at the Temple Of Time, you remove the Master Sword and are transported to seven years into the future, and everything has changed… including Link.



### AN OLD FRIEND

■ After leaving her in the woods, you finally reconnect with Saria after beating the Forest Temple. Saria is now the Forest Sage, and Link reawakens her by beating Phantom Ganon. Saria expresses her regret that Link vanished for so long and professes her unrelenting friendship.



> **“The music was great… Those tunes have stuck in my head for 17 years”**
> Mark R. Jones

really, simple to engage in combat with the various fiends and foes in the game. Honestly, I’m pretty rubbish at playing games and in previous titles I’d be flailing around trying to slash and hack at whatever was attacking me. *Ocarina* had this target-lock system where you’d be able to lock on to the bad guy then all your attacks would be aimed in the right place, exactly where it’s going to count. The camera worked well, too, you could circle something that was attacking you and the camera would pan round so you could still see what you were doing. I rarely had any issues with that, I don’t remember not being able to see myself at the most important times. Games with dodgy cameras, for example, would sometimes have a rock or a tree in between you and the screen and all you could see was this rock and hear the sound of your energy being depleted as you’re scrabbling around trying to get this damn camera to move position so you could see yourself. However they did it in *Ocarina* and it worked perfectly.

Also, the team did manage to create what seemed like a whole world in your N64 that you could explore at your leisure. Everyone loves a bit of escapism and this was perfect for that. It served me well over the dark winter nights of late 1998/99.

**How important was it to the evolution of 3D adventures?**
As I said earlier, it upped the level for those genre of games. Anything that came out after this *had* to try and improve or beat this. Otherwise, what would have been the point of even starting another game of this ilk? It looked great, you always just wanted to get that little bit further to see what it was going to throw at you next. The music was great, too, those tunes have stuck in my head for 17 years!

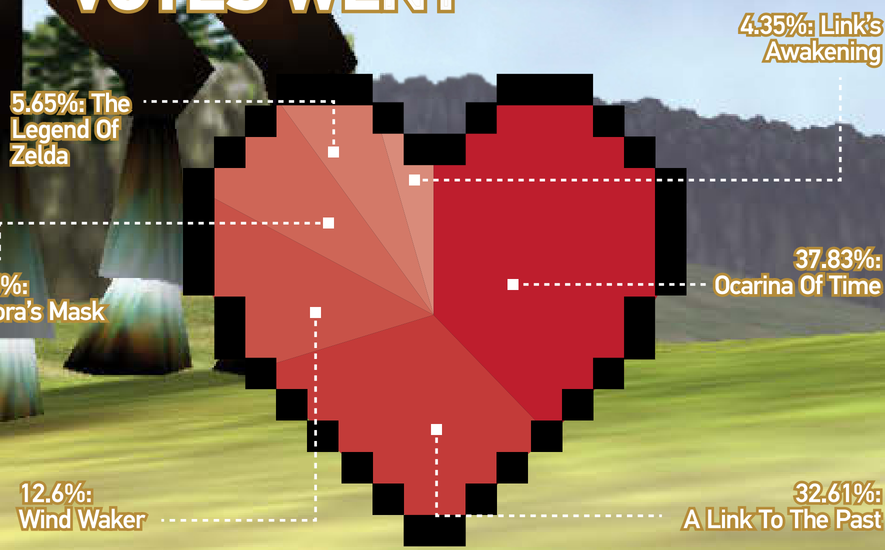
**As a graphic artist, how does the game world impress you?**
The animation was spot-on. Some earlier N64 titles had some dodgy graphics with people running with bow legs, or slide walking. That always used to make me wince, when the floor you were supposed to be running on moved quicker than the steps you were supposed to be taking. Link *stomped* across that landscape, you felt tired for him! You could almost see his footprints in the ground, he was putting some effort to get to where he was going. Some of those scenes were breathtaking when you saw them for the first time. Watch the intro to see what I mean, the sun’s setting and Link’s riding his horse across a field. You could just plug the cart in and watch that for five minutes before you did anything. Gorgeous.

## THE HORSE WHISPERER

■ When you return as an adult, Lon Lon Ranch has been bequeathed to Ingo by Ganondorf. After paying Ingo to ride one of his horses, if you play Epona’s Song on your ocarina, Epona becomes tame and allows you to ride her. After a couple of wagers, you win the horse from Ingo, leaping over the walls before coming to rest on top of a hill in suitably heroic fashion. A great moment.



## HOW YOUR VOTES WENT






# YOUR GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

**Surprised? You shouldn't be. Nintendo's magnum opus sold over 20 million copies and launched one of the greatest consoles of all time. Nick Thorpe takes a look back at the greatest game ever, as chosen by you**

## 1 Super Mario World

■ Year: 1990 ■ Platform: SNES ■ Previous position: 2 ▲

When Nintendo finally entered the 16-bit console race in November 1990, it was in the unfamiliar position of having to stake its claim to market leadership against real competition. The company responded in typical fashion, by launching the Super Famicom with possibly the greatest one-two punch in videogame history. The turbo-charged Mode 7 racer *F-Zero* offered plenty of substance, but its appeal hinged on style and the lure of the unfamiliar. It was Nintendo's way of demonstrating technological superiority. On the other hand, *Super Mario World* definitely looked the part, but its main function was to provide substance




» [SNES] Sumo Brothers are challenging – they'll hammer lightning downwards, setting the ground below ablaze.

and familiarity (in fact, the game bore the subtitle *Super Mario Bros. 4* in Japan). With it, Nintendo intended to reaffirm its position as the world's leading developer of videogames – and it succeeded.

To advance the game past its superb predecessors, Nintendo assigned a mixture of veteran hands and new talent to develop *Super Mario World*. Of the 15-strong team that developed the game, nine were returning from *Super Mario Bros. 3* and one had previously worked on *Super Mario Bros. 2*, while the remaining five had no prior credits and injected some fresh insight. The other major change was a new lead game director – in this case Takashi Tezuka, who had previously served alongside Shigeru Miyamoto as an assistant director and later co-director. Miyamoto himself remained on the development team, but stepped back into the less hands-on role of a producer.

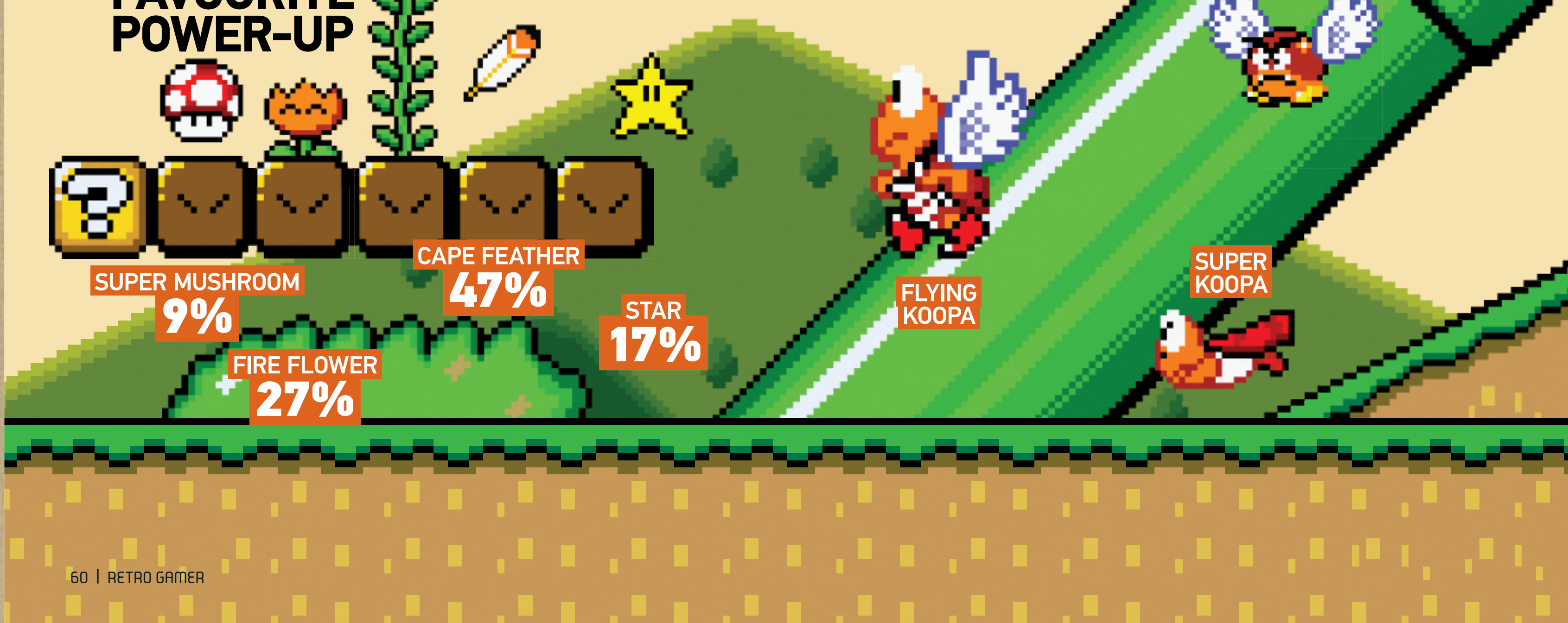
As far as the basic game design is concerned, the team wisely decided not to fix what wasn't broken. The block-based level designs are familiar to anyone that has played a *Mario* game, and Mario's skills and abilities




» [SNES] This swarm of Bullet Bills is testament to the fact that there's a real challenge present.

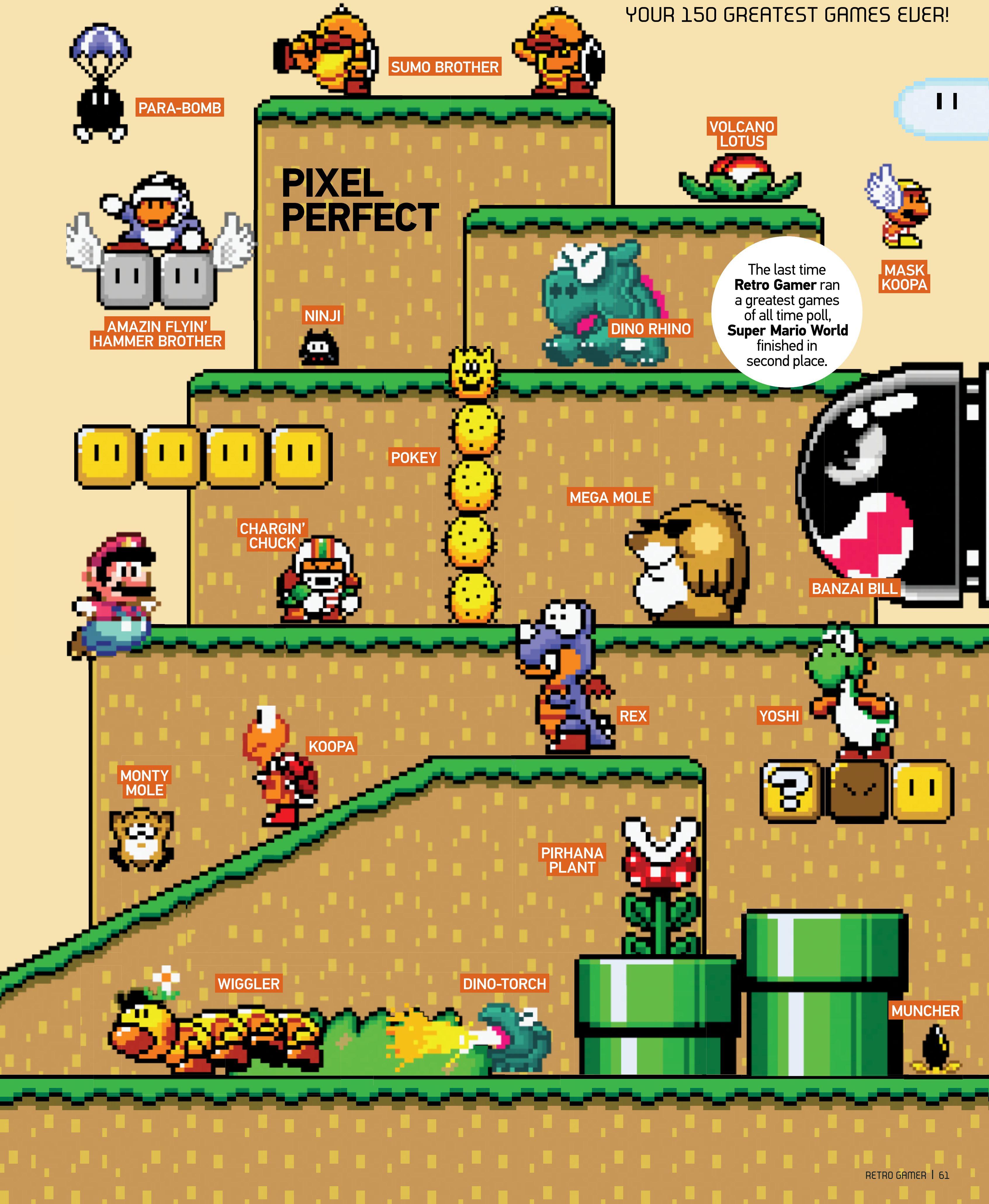
are largely drawn from *Super Mario Bros. 3*, albeit with a few tweaks. The variety of special forms was scaled back to Fire Mario and Caped Mario (a new form, but one functionally similar to Raccoon Mario), and Mario retained the ability to kick carried items but could not boot them skyward. Other than that, the ▶

## YOUR FAVOURITE POWER-UP



# PIXEL PERFECT

The last time **Retro Gamer** ran a greatest games of all time poll, **Super Mario World** finished in second place.









SPIKE TOP

## GAME BOY ADVANTAGE

### Super Mario World only has one non-emulated conversion and Super Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World is certainly interesting…

When Nintendo chose to bring *Super Mario World* to the Game Boy Advance back in 2001, it came across with a variety of changes. The most notable of these is related to Luigi. As well as using his revised sprites from the *Super Mario All-Stars* edition of *Super Mario World*, he's got his high jump and slippery run back from previous games. Other characters have also had a graphical touch-up, and the visuals have been brightened all-round due to the lack of a backlight in the original Game Boy Advance model. While the music has all been retained, there are definite differences in sound due to the differences in sound hardware between the SNES and Game Boy Advance. However, Mario, Luigi, the Koopalings and the Boos have all gained voices. There's also a brand new intro sequence featuring Mario, Luigi and Peach.

In terms of game design, a few changes have been made – Dragon Coins have been added to stages that didn't previously feature them, and your spin jump protects you from more enemies than in the original. Once you've encountered a coloured Yoshi, you can find them in regular stages by finding an egg with certain power-ups. Additionally, if you've got the cape or fire powers, a hit won't send you straight back to your small form. The game can also be saved at any time. No matter which version you play, *Super Mario World* is an amazing game, but the changes may cause purists to stick to the original SNES version.

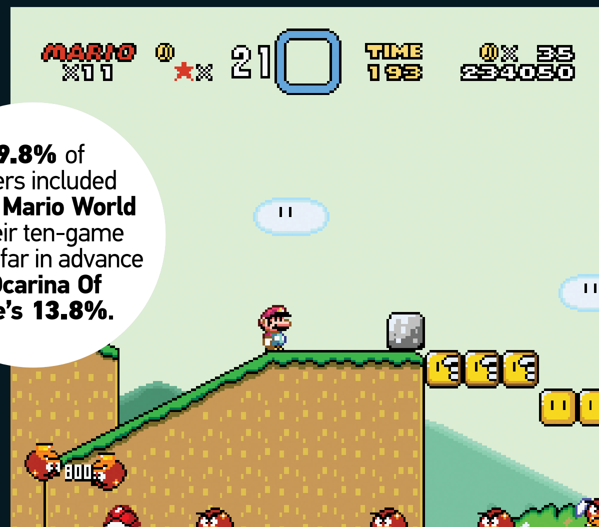
▶ portly plumber gained a new companion in the form of Yoshi, a dinosaur that will grant him a ride and eat quite a few of the enemies that stand in his way.

The major innovation of *Super Mario World* was its structure. *Super Mario Bros.* had introduced the concept of multiple stage exits with its Warp Zones, and *Super Mario Bros. 3* had introduced a world map to the series. What *Super Mario World* did was to combine the two concepts into a non-linear experience. Whenever a stage had more than one exit, there was usually a good reason to seek that extra exit – at the very minimum it could lead to a secret stage, but it might also lead to a warp or even one of the game's Switch Palace stages. When completed, each of the four Switch Palaces activated appropriately coloured blocks throughout the game – you could tell where they were meant to be thanks to the appearance of their coloured outlines. Often they just made things a little easier by blocking off pits or providing extra platforms, but occasionally they would be crucial to making progress.

In retrospect, *Super Mario World* is surprisingly economical with its resources, given its status as a showcase game for a new console. Take the game's music as an example – Koji Kondo's soundtrack makes excellent use of theme and variation. When you first hear the overworld music, you get your first experience of a melody that persists throughout the game, forming the basis for almost every piece of action music from the underground and underwater stages to the castles and ghost houses. Likewise, while it's always visually enticing, *Super Mario World*'s wealth of levels means that it inevitably reuses backgrounds and objects frequently. What's more, the game makes sparse use of the console's advanced graphical features – where other designers might be tempted to design in such a way that highlights them, transparency and Mode 7 scaling and rotation are only deployed where they make sense in the context of the game design.

That's the real genius of *Super Mario World*, though – it is a textbook example of a design team managing to make a lot from a little, because fresh ideas are never in short supply. You can take the scenic route through the game, taking in as many stages as possible on the way to the climactic fight with Bowser, and never encounter the contempt that repetition breeds. When you encounter a tense section in which you hop between moving platforms as buzzsaws hurtle towards you, that's the only time it'll happen. Even late in the game, you'll find new ideas, like a maze built from overlapping

**19.8%** of readers included **Super Mario World** on their ten-game ballot – far in advance of **Ocarina Of Time's 13.8%.**



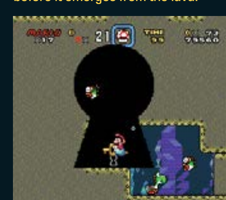
» [SNES] *Super Mario World* offers visual cues – these slopes make the solution to this line of enemies obvious.

» [SNES] Mario's new dinosaur pal stomps enemies efficiently, but gains far more from eating them.




THWOMP


» [SNES] Blargg is a sneaky foe, checking that you're approaching before it emerges from the lava.


» [SNES] Secret exits are the key to *Super Mario World*'s long-term appeal (pun definitely intended).


WIZARD


BUZZY BEETLE


PORCU-PUFFER


BLURPS


RIP VAN FISH

LIL SPARKY

SWOOPERS

## THE SHORTEST ROAD

**Do you want beat this classic, but are pressed for time? Worry not – with this guide, you'll have the game finished quick**



**1** Start with Yoshi's Island 2 and play normally until you reach Donut Plains 1. Once you get there, grab a cape from a Super Koopa. Use it to fly to the key near the end of the stage for a secret exit.



**2** In Donut Secret 1, you'll need to find another secret exit – you can do this by finding a P Switch, then using it to turn these blocks into coins so you can retrieve the key from the Question Block.



**3** Donut Secret House has a hidden boss fight – you'll need to trigger this vine, pictured above, then use a P Switch to reveal a door at the top. Beat the Big Boo and you'll gain access to Star Road.



**4** Beat each Star World stage by finding its secret exit. In Star World 2, you can acquire a blue Yoshi which gains the ability to fly when its mouth is full – make sure you leave the stage with it.



**5** In Star World 4, use your Yoshi to fly beneath a section of blocks to reach the exit. You can now access Bowser's Castle and beat the game, having seen just 12 of the game's 72 stages.

HOT HEAD

> **"Super Mario World is surprisingly economical with its resources"**

layers of moving rock. Those ideas which are re-used, such as the new puzzle-centric Ghost House stages, are presented in ways which leave each encounter feeling distinct.

What's all the more surprising is that this level of creativity is found in the series' fourth game. Some of it can be attributed to the power of the SNES allowing the designers to do things that had previously proven impossible, and the addition of a save battery certainly enabled the enormous game world to be realised. However, credit must also go to the development team for breaking new ground when it would have been easy to just provide a slightly prettier version of what had gone before.

But *Super Mario World* was all the more special because it represented the end of an era, as the last traditional 2D *Mario* platformer to hit a home console for many a year. *Yoshi's Island* was a marked departure from the traditional Mario style, and Nintendo took its mascot into the world of 3D for his next major console game. By the time Mario's side-scrolling adventures returned in the *New Super Mario Bros.* series, traditional pixel art and chiptunes had been left behind and things never quite felt the same.

According to your votes, *Super Mario World* is the greatest game of all time. It's not hard to see why, because it comprises all the things about gaming that people love. It looks nice, sounds wonderful and is masterfully designed, offering players an experience that can be enjoyed in whichever way they prefer. If you want depth and discovery, *Super Mario World* can give you that. If you want to make your way to the end as quickly as possible through brute force, that's allowed too. It represents familiarity, as a sequel featuring one of the most recognisable characters not just in gaming, but in all of pop culture. However, as a launch game, it also represents the thrill of new things – that unforgettable rush of excitement you experienced when you saw hardware doing things you'd never thought possible, and the unbounded possibilities that presented themselves in your mind as a result. It's a game that can be – and has been – enjoyed by players of all ages, from all over the world.

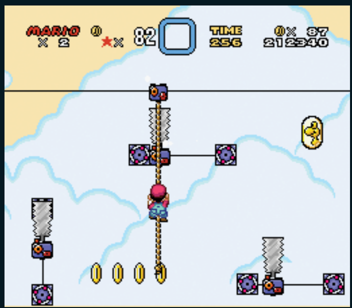
Shared nostalgia is what brings us together as retro gamers, and according to you lot, no other game appeals quite so broadly. All hail Mario – the King Of Games. ★

THWIMP

BOO BUDDIES



» [SNES] Ghost Houses typically offer simple obstacles but tricky navigation, requiring brainpower over quick reflexes.



» [SNES] Hanging off a dangling rope while avoiding buzzsaws is a unique thrill – it only comes up once.



» [SNES] The boss themes use the same melody as the action stages, but they feel completely different.

DRY BONES

BONY BEETLE

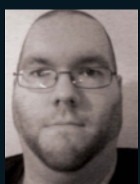
URCHIN

FISHBONES

TORPEDO TED

# Q&A: ROBERT FENNELL

**Known online as GreenDeathFlavor, this speedrunner shares his insight on demolishing Mario's finest game**



**When did you first encounter *Super Mario World*, and what did you make of it?**
My first encounter with *Super Mario World* happened in 1992, when we got a Super Nintendo and my siblings and I were playing in the living room. I was a Mario kid – we had all of the *Mario* games. My best *Mario* memory is when I was first in our house to beat *Super Mario Bros.*.

**What's your fastest completion time for *Super Mario World*, and how did you achieve it?**
My fastest completion is in 9 minutes 47 seconds (9:47.58). I acheived that in January 2015, breaking a tie between myself and dram55 when we both had a personal best of exactly 9:48.98.

The run was done using a glitch in the game known as the 'cloud glitch'. When Mario collects a coin that Yoshi is about to eat, it gets replaced by the next available sprite, in this case, the Chargin' Chuck. Chargin' Chucks have the ability to give power-ups when eaten. In 2014, it was discovered that you can eat a Chargin' Chuck as small Mario and the game will give you a Lakitu cloud. The Lakitu cloud is useful because it can manipulate Bowser in the Bowser fight, making him stop instantly when it's moving off-screen to the left. This means you can complete the final battle up to a minute faster.

In January I finally got a solid run with a good Bowser battle which resulted in a new record which has stood for ten months now, but is beatable. The record could very well come down a full second or more with a perfect run.

**Why is *Super Mario World* such a good game to speedrun?**
I believe it's a good game to speedrun because it's a relatively easy game to learn. A lot of levels are beatable by just flying over them. There's also a lot of variety with this game. If you're looking for a fast easy run you can do any level. If you're looking for something a bit longer you can do no Star World. Of course, there's 96-Exit where you beat every level in the game. You could even challenge yourself with the no cape category.

**What techniques are essential for any *Super Mario World* speedrunner to succeed?**
You should play through the game a bit to get used to the game and its physics. Then practice every level and watch videos to learn new strategies. New runners can find videos for every level on smwwiki.com. I like to use a lot of visual and sound cues. I think it's important to find these cues for executing moves with tight input windows. When you have all the basics down you can begin to study and learn glitches if your goal is to get a fast time.

If you really get into *SMW* speedrunning and learn everything then it's all about the grind. You can't get record overnight, you need to put in a lot of attempts. When I first started I had times of over eleven minutes. It took me about a year and a half before I got world record in my category, so patience is definitely required.

# BOSS RUSH

**What kind of hero would Mario be if he didn't bring down a few behemoths on his travels? Here's a rogue's gallery of the miscreants he comes up against in Super Mario World**




**REZNOR**

**1** This quartet of fire-breathing triceratops stands atop a set of rotating platforms. You'll need to bump them from underneath, but watch out! Once you've knocked a couple of them from their platforms, the ground beneath you will start to give way. If you can't take out the remaining beasts, you'll need to hitch a ride on their carousel in order to finish them off. Oh, and if you were wondering, Reznor *is* named after the Nine Inch Nails frontman, Trent Reznor.



**BIG BOO**

**2** Mario spends most of his time running away from these ghostly baddies, but the Big Boo resident in Donut Secret House is an aggressive sort. Unlike his compatriots elsewhere, he's capable of disappearing at will and is accompanied by a couple of regular Boos. You'll need to pick up Grab Blocks from below and throw them upwards at Big Boo, but they'll only hit when he turns visible. Three hits should be enough to see him off for good.

**IGGY KOOPA**

**3** After battling your way through Iggy's castle, you'll encounter him atop a tilting platform, floating in a sea of lava. What follows is a deadly sumo contest, as you try to push him into the molten rock while he tries to toast you with fireballs. When you jump on him, he'll always slide downwards – so ideally, you want to time your hits for when he's close to the edge and it's tilting down. Fire Mario makes this fight a walkover, incidentally.





BLARGG

### MORTON KOOPA

**4** Your mere presence is enough to drive Morton up the wall – literally, as he runs towards the wall and then runs straight up it and onto the ceiling. Once he's up there, you'd better keep moving as he's going to try to jump down onto you. When he lands, turn the tables on him and jump on his head. He's the game's easiest boss, and a few hits will see this him off without much of a fuss.

### LUDWIG VON KOOPA

**6** Hey look, it's a throwback to the original *Super Mario Bros.*! Ludwig is much like the Bowser of old, standing on the right of the screen and breathing fire at you, but now he's got a twist – a spinning backflip which makes getting behind him less of a brilliant plan than it might seem. Jump on his head a few times and you'll see him off. Incidentally, Ludwig Von Koopa boasts one of the game's few non-repeated boss templates.

### ROY KOOPA

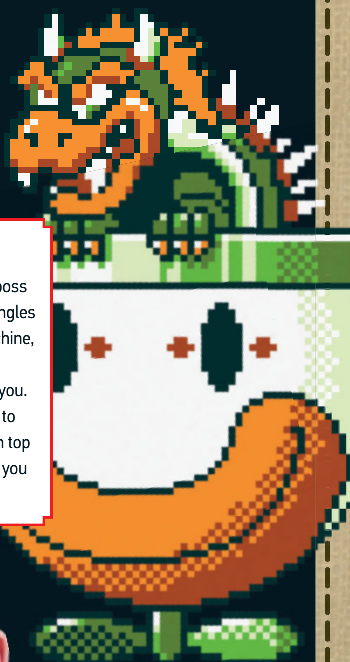
**7** Roy's fight is much like the battle against Morton, but harder – the walls are closing in, making for a claustrophobic work environment. He is defeated in exactly the same way.

### LEMMY KOOPA

**5** Lemmy is quite happy to try to trick you rather than attack you directly, momentarily emerging from pipes while employing two decoys. The only threats here are the fireball lazily bouncing around the screen and the time limit, although the pipes make movement slightly tricky. Jump on Lemmy's head three times and you'll defeat him.

### WENDY O. KOOPA

**8** Wendy shares her brilliant plan with the hare-brained Lemmy, substituting the uneven pipes for a second bouncing fireball – so you face a greater threat, but with greater mobility. Jump on her head.



### BOWSER

**10** One of only two completely unavoidable boss fights in the game, Bowser has various angles of attack. He'll try to ram you with his flying machine, he'll drop fire on you from above, he'll roll giant metal balls at you and he'll lob Mechakoopas at you. The latter are important – to beat him, you need to immobilise them, then lob them upwards and on top of Bowser. After a couple of hits, Peach will give you a mushroom. Then rinse and repeat!

### LARRY KOOPA

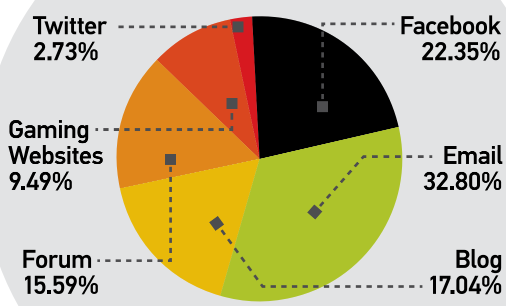
**9** Larry has borrowed that fancy tilting platform from Iggy, and he's hooked up the lava fountain to spit up some nice deadly fireballs too. Give him a nice hot bath.



# THE ULTIMATE

## HOW MANY OF THE 150 GREATEST GAMES HAVE YOU PLAYED?

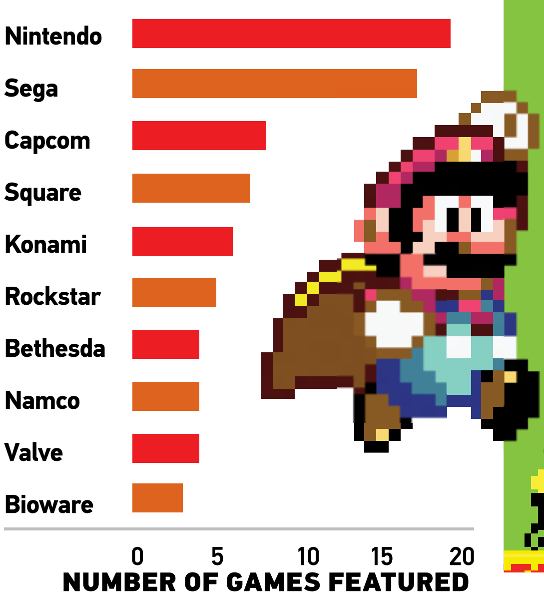

Streets Of Rage



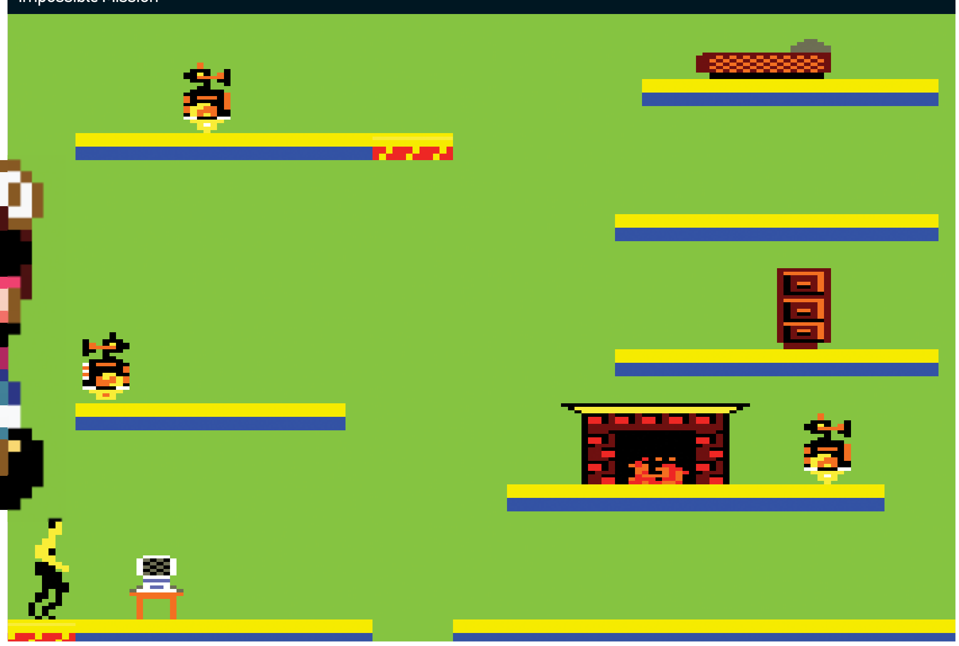

### HOW **YOU** VOTED

| Rank | Game |
|---|---|
| 150 | Double Dragon |
| 149 | Mass Effect |
| 148 | Metroid |
| 147 | Chuckie Egg |
| 146 | Ridge Racer |
| 145 | OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast |
| 144 | Another World |
| 143 | Gauntlet |
| 142 | Persona 4 |
| 141 | Gunstar Heroes |
| 140 | Space Invaders |
| 139 | Mr Do! |
| 138 | Frontier: Elite II |
| 137 | Super Mario 3D World |
| 136 | Duke Nukem 3D |
| 135 | The Lords Of Midnight |
| 134 | Tempest 2000 |
| 133 | Daytona USA |
| 132 | Jet Set Radio |
| 131 | Bomb Jack |
| 130 | Tekken 3 |
| 129 | Rock Band 3 |
| 128 | Soul Calibur |
| 127 | F-Zero GX |
| 126 | Flashback |
| 125 | Silent Hill |
| 124 | The Legend Of Zelda: Link's Awakening |
| 123 | Head Over Heels |
| 122 | Grant Theft Auto III |
| 121 | Civilization II |
| 120 | Cannon Fodder |
| 119 | System Shock 2 |
| 118 | Command & Conquer: Red Alert |
| 117 | NiGHTS Into Dreams |
| 116 | Strider |
| 115 | Final Fantasy VIII |
| 114 | Kick Off 2 |
| 113 | Skies Of Arcadia |
| 112 | Chaos |
| 111 | Super Smash Bros. Melee |
| 110 | Mario Kart 8 |
| 109 | Batman: Arkham Asylum |
| 108 | Donkey Kong |
| 107 | 3D Deathchase |
| 106 | The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind |
| 105 | Syndicate |
| 104 | Impossible Mission |
| 103 | Day Of The Tentacle |
| 102 | Jetpac |
| 101 | Crazy Taxi |
| 100 | Pokémon Gold & Silver |
| 99 | Defender |
| 98 | Civilization IV |
| 97 | Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater |
| 96 | Portal 2 |
| 95 | Final Fantasy IX |
| 94 | Super Castlevania IV |
| 93 | Advance Wars |
| 92 | Alex Kidd In Miracle World |
| 91 | Ico |
| 90 | World Of Warcraft |
| 89 | Streets Of Rage |
| 88 | Quake |
| 87 | The Legend Of Zelda |
| 86 | Final Fight |
| 85 | Grant Theft Auto: San Andreas |
| 84 | Rez |
| 83 | Resident Evil (GameCube) |
| 82 | Super Mario Galaxy 2 |
| 81 | Turrican 2 |
| 80 | Command & Conquer |
| 79 | Silent Hill 2 |
| 78 | Donkey Kong Country |
| 77 | Uncharted 2 |
| 76 | Final Fantasy X |
| 75 | Sonic 3 & Knuckles |
| 74 | Metroid Prime |
| 73 | The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion |
| 72 | Mario Kart 64 |
| 71 | Red Dead Redemption |
| 70 | Secret Of Mana |
| 69 | The Legend Of Zelda: Majora's Mask |
| 68 | Mega Man 2 |

### HIGHEST RATED DEVELOPERS




Impossible Mission



# CHECKLIST

YOUR 150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!

SEVENTIES | EIGHTIES | NINETIES | NOUGHTIES | TENTIES



Cannon Fodder

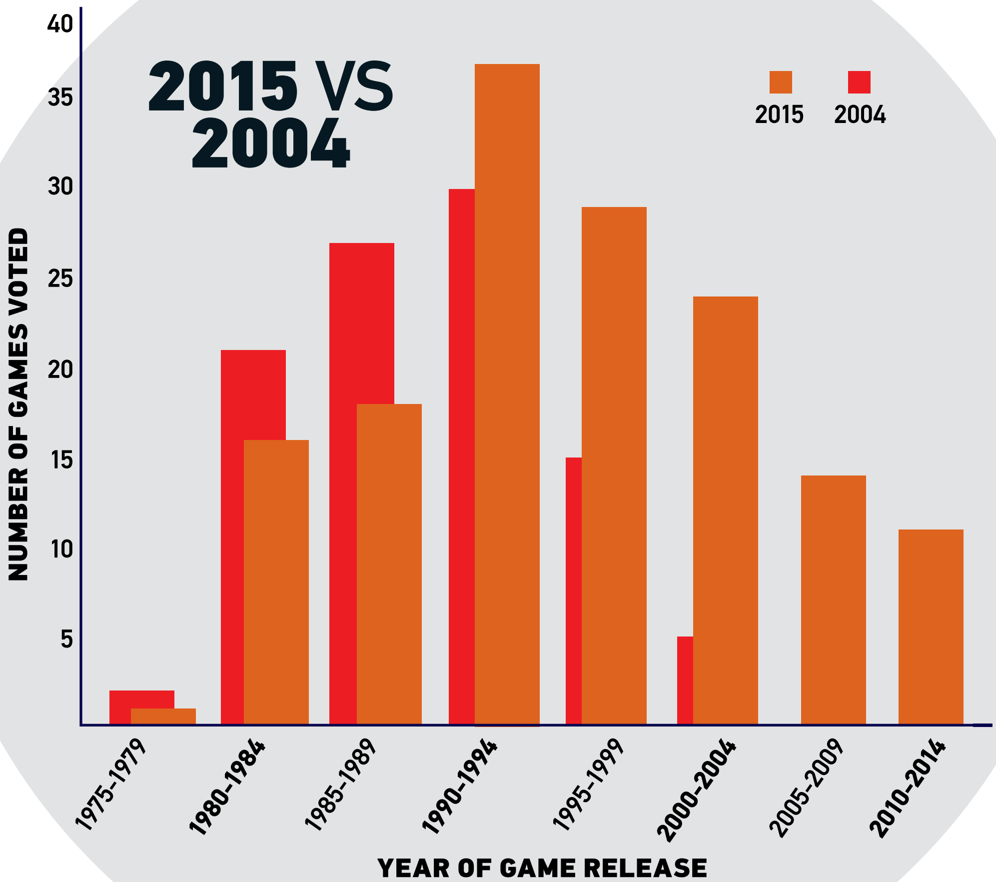


Duke Nukem 3D

| | |
|---|---|
| 67 | Sega Rally Championship |
| 66 | Rainbow Islands |
| 65 | UFO: Enemy Unknown |
| 64 | Banjo-Kazooie |
| 63 | Star Wars |
| 62 | Civilzation |
| 61 | Portal |
| 60 | Mass Effect 2 |
| 59 | Paradroid |
| 58 | Pokémon Red & Blue |
| 57 | Bioshock |
| 56 | Dungeon Master |
| 55 | Jet Set Willy |
| 54 | Dark Souls |
| 53 | Shadow Of The Colossus |
| 52 | Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic |
| 51 | Sensible Soccer |
| 50 | Doom II |

| | |
|---|---|
| 49 | Deus Ex |
| 48 | Robotron: 2084 |
| 47 | Pac-Man |
| 46 | Lemmings |
| 45 | Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe |
| 44 | Sensible World Of Soccer |
| 43 | Resident Evil |
| 42 | Super Mario Galaxy |
| 41 | R-Type |
| 40 | Super Mario Bros. |
| 39 | Half-Life |
| 38 | Tomb Raider |
| 37 | Final Fantasy VI |
| 36 | The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker |
| 35 | Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge |
| 34 | Bubble bobble |
| 33 | Chrono Trigger |
| 32 | Resident Evil 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 31 | Grand Theft Auto V |
| 30 | Manic Miner |
| 29 | Fallout 3 |
| 28 | Sonic The Hedgehog |
| 27 | Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night |
| 26 | The Last Of Us |
| 25 | Grand Theft Auto Vice City |
| 24 | Halo: Combat Evolved |
| 23 | Super Metroid |
| 22 | Out Run |
| 21 | Elite |
| 20 | Half-Life 2 |
| 19 | The Secret Of Monkey Island |
| 18 | Streets Of Rage 2 |
| 17 | The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim |
| 16 | Shenmue II |
| 15 | Metal Gear Solid |
| 14 | Sonic The Hedgehog 2 |
| 13 | Street Fighter II |
| 12 | Super Mario Kart |
| 11 | Super Mario Bros. 3 |
| 10 | GoldenEye 007 |
| 9 | Resident Evil 4 |
| 8 | Doom |
| 7 | Final Fantasy VII |
| 6 | The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past |
| 5 | Super Mario 64 |
| 4 | Tetris |
| 3 | Shenmue |
| 2 | The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time |
| 1 | Super Mario World |






The Last Of Us



# INSIDE THE
# COMMODO

**The C64 was born to play games. Albert Charpentier and Yash Terakura tell Rory Milne how custom chips intended for a killer games console instead powered the world's bestselling computer**



# RE 64





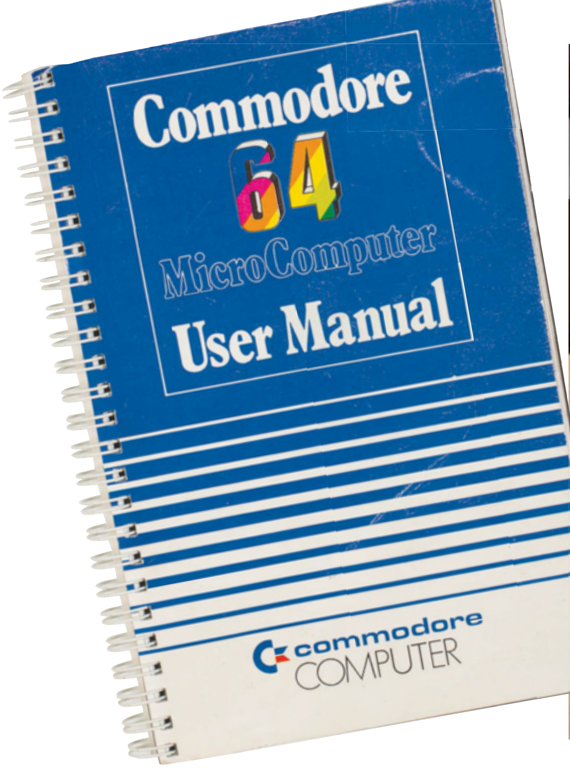

» The controller ports on the Commodore 64 accept both joysticks and mice.



» This port allows you to place cartridges in your Commodore 64, such as the Final Cartridge III.

**The story of the C64 is fundamentally one of two innovative chips created in 1981 at the Pennsylvania-based Commodore** subsidiary, MOS Technology. But the system's success was secured by a third chip and a leap of faith on falling memory prices. And the machine's dominance was ensured by Commodore boss Jack Tramiel obsessing over its cost and insisting on a quality keyboard sourced through his Japanese operation.

The Commodore 64's well-received predecessor, the VIC-20, had been delivered thanks to a similar balancing of cost and quality. MOS engineering manager Albert Charpentier was responsible for designing the VIC-20's video chip, which had first been pitched to console manufacturers. Albert's plan was to have another crack at the console market with a better graphics chip. "The VIC chip was done so I started to work on the VIC-II chip," Albert begins. "The original premise of the chip was: 'Ok, the VIC was good, but it wasn't good enough to entice the game community to buy into it.' We looked at different arcade games from Taito, Konami and Atari. We looked at the features those games had so that at least we would be able to imitate arcade graphics with the VIC-II. Processors back then weren't as capable as they are today. It was a struggle to smoothly move things across the screen so that's where we put in what we called the 'sprite concept' so you could simply define the character, put in an X and Y coordinate and it would appear wherever you wanted it. So it really supported the processor so that you could smoothly move objects around the screen."







» The C64's function keys are typically used for controlling a program or activating often-used routines.

> **"We put two joystick ports on for two-player games. Even though it was a computer I still wanted it to be a good games machine!"**
> Albert Charpentier

As Albert devised his custom graphics chip, MOS engineer Bob Yannes developed a complementary sound chip, the 'SID', which was inspired by synthesiser keyboards rather than computer audio chips. "Bob was really fascinated with music – his passion was audio. The VIC had some audio capability, but it was very minimal. Bob said: 'Why don't we make a full three or four voice chip that has all the fundamentals of a synthesiser keyboard?' So we essentially copied a lot of the things that were done in those keyboards; we didn't look at audio chips from our competitors," says Albert.

But Albert and Bob still needed to get the go-ahead from Jack Tramiel to develop their respective chips, which they secured with the support of Charles Winterble. "Charles Winterble was a product engineer who was hired to get a better [chip] yield, we worked pretty closely together," continues Albert. "Charlie, Bob and myself presented the VIC-II and SID concept to Jack, [we said]: 'This is the next generation.' Our pitch was a really good games console. Jack said: 'Go ahead and work with the two chips. We will see what happens.'"

**Just months later, however, impressive sales of the VIC-20 saw the pair switch from games console design to** home computer development. "Within six months, everyone saw it was going to be a computer. It was clear that the VIC-20 was a wonderful success – it sold, I think, close to a million units. So we said: 'Rather than doing a game console lets make this a better VIC-20.' So it would have better features. We looked at the whole memory management issue and things like that to make a more effective computer. The graphics were still a key part; it was going to be a home computer so it had to have entertainment features."

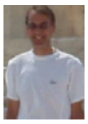
The sound chip that Bob Yannes was working on was just as important to the entertainment credentials of the VIC-20's successor – although its advanced nature was causing a few headaches. "It was the first time something like that had been done on a chip", explains Albert. "It was really hard to get filters and frequencies, and try to create a true synthesiser. It was going to be a four-voice synthesiser, but the chip was too big and we had to cut it down to three."

Thanks to Jack Tramiel's keen eye for market trends, Albert next found himself reworking a variant of the 6502 processor used in the VIC-20 so that its successor could handle more memory. "Jack would come in once a month and we'd give him a report. 64K RAM chips were just becoming available, and Jack said: 'Listen, put 64K into it. Everyone is going to be producing that RAM, it's ▶

## SID MAESTROS The six musicians who made the C64 sing

### ROB HUBBARD

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
Master Of Magic



■ At times, the arrangements of Rob Hubbard's SID compositions make them sound almost orchestral, although quite how this is possible given just three synthesiser voices to work with remains a mystery. Rob's *Master Of Magic* score spans multiple musical styles and techniques to great effect.



### BEN DAGLISH

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
The Last Ninja



■ Preferring to freelance rather than work in-house, Ben Daglish was nothing if not prolific during his C64 days. Ben produced over a hundred SID tunes, which typically get described as 'feel-good', but his often-understated work on *The Last Ninja* proves this to be something of a generalisation.



### MARTIN GALWAY

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
Wizball



■ Likely remembered as much for the amazing sounds he coaxed out of the SID chip as for his compositions, there's no doubting that Martin Galway made the C64 sing. Martin's *Wizball* title tune sees the C64 rock out to the synthesised strains of a weeping guitar with keyboard accompaniment.



### JONATHAN DUNN

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
Platoon

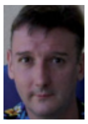


■ A late arrival to the professional SID music scene, Jonathan Dunn took over from Martin Galway when he left Ocean Software in 1987. Jonathan's first gig at Ocean was side-scroller *Platoon*, for which he created a memorably atmospheric title tune. His body of work has a distinctive, clean sound.

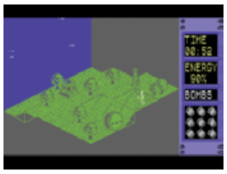


### DAVE WHITTAKER

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
Glider Rider



■ Perhaps the busiest of all SID musicians; Dave has gone on record to say that he has wrote tunes for over 400 C64 games. Dave's SID tunes have a uniquely 'electronic' sound reminiscent of the music that pervaded the pop charts of the Eighties and typified by his upbeat *Glider Rider* title music.



### MATT GRAY

**MEMORABLE GAME:**
Last Ninja 2



■ Like Jonathan Dunn, Matt Gray arrived late to the SID tune party in 1987, but he made up for lost time with epic compositions for the likes of *Driller*. An exclusive contract with System 3 and arguably Matt's finest SID work followed with his *Last Ninja 2* soundtrack. Matt is working on remastering his work.





# INSIDE THE COMMODORE 64 The low-down on the C64's key components

## CASSETTE PORT

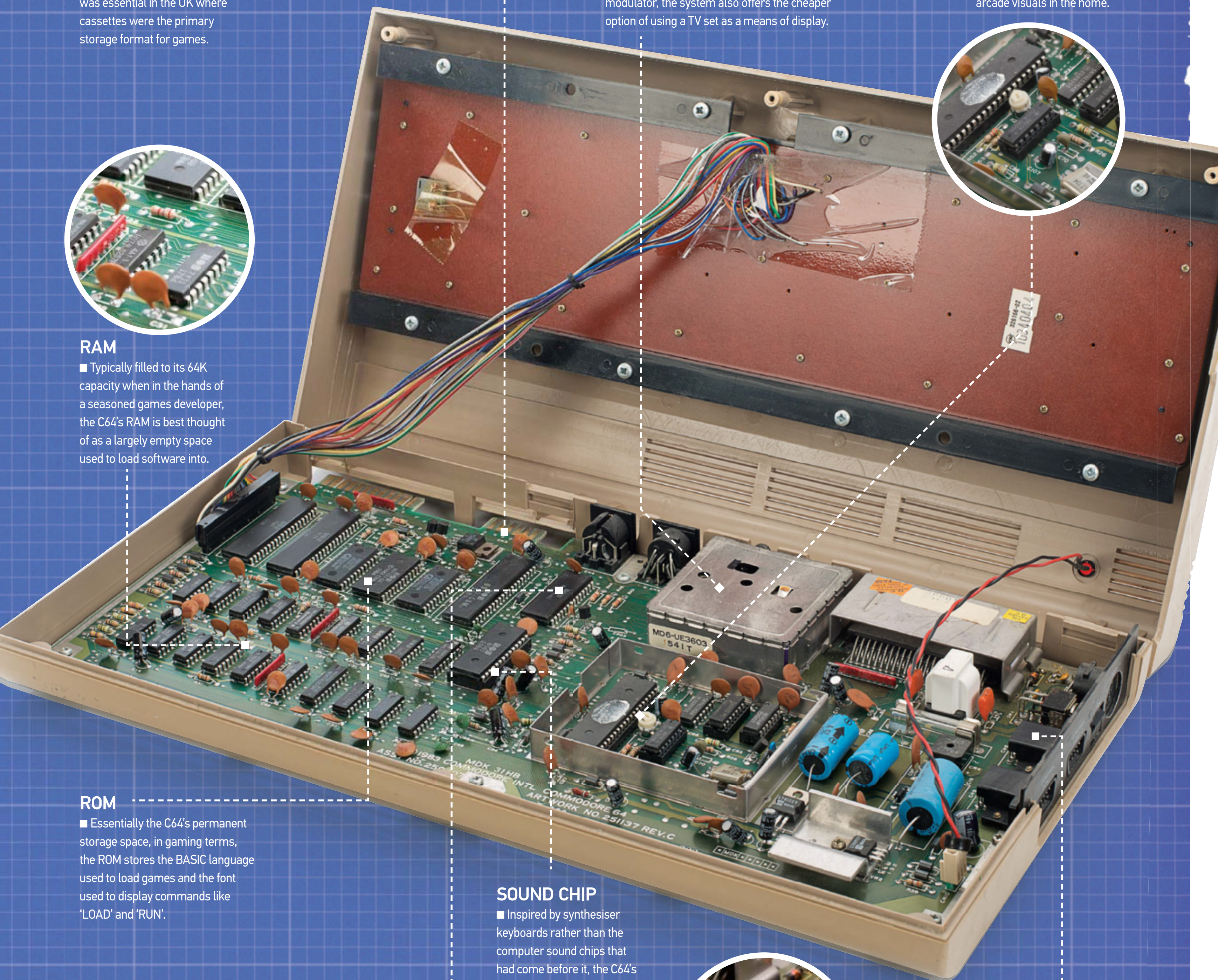
■ Slightly redundant in the US where the preference was for disk drives, the C64's cassette port was essential in the UK where cassettes were the primary storage format for games.

## RF MODULATOR

■ Although the C64 has a video port that supports compatible monitors, thanks to its RF modulator, the system also offers the cheaper option of using a TV set as a means of display.

## VIDEO CHIP

■ The multi-coloured sprites that define C64 gaming are produced and managed by the VIC-II. Albert Charpentier designed this custom graphics chip to emulate arcade visuals in the home.



## RAM

■ Typically filled to its 64K capacity when in the hands of a seasoned games developer, the C64's RAM is best thought of as a largely empty space used to load software into.

## ROM

■ Essentially the C64's permanent storage space, in gaming terms, the ROM stores the BASIC language used to load games and the font used to display commands like 'LOAD' and 'RUN'.

## SOUND CHIP

■ Inspired by synthesiser keyboards rather than the computer sound chips that had come before it, the C64's revolutionary SID chip was given three 'voices' by its creator Bob Yannes.

## CPU

■ The 6510 CPU puts the '64' in C64. Unlike the Spectrum or BBC's CPUs, the 6510 can manage 64K of RAM by disabling access to BASIC and everything else stored in the C64's ROM.



## CONTROL PORTS

■ Technically for all sorts of peripherals, the C64's twin control ports were designed for two joysticks and the two-player gaming that would allow. The ports also support mice and paddles.



» Albert is currently involved in developing electronic devices for the renewable energy market.



» The AV Jack is on the left, while the serial port on the right handles devices such as printers and disk drives.

▶ going to get very cheap and it would be a great marketing position.' The 6502 could only address 64K, and that had to be ROM, RAM, video stuff and so forth. So that started the design of the 6510 where you could bank-switch pieces of memory around [to] access the hidden 32K of RAM underneath the ROM."

Of course, three custom chips and 64K of RAM don't make a computer, and so Albert started on a circuit board to accommodate these and other components. As more engineers joined the project, their prototype became known as the VIC-40. "It was the VIC-40 initially because the VIC-20 had 20 characters on the screen versus the VIC-40 which was going to have 40 characters," Albert continues. "The VIC-II chip was done, but Bob was still working on the SID. So I started working on the PCB and getting the schematics and everything ready for that. When Bob finished up the SID he started working with Bob Russell to put together the final touches on the architecture and work up the software. Dave Ziembicki was the technician. Bob Russell basically took the VIC-20 software and remade it for the VIC-40. We put the two joystick ports on for two-player games. I loved games – so even though it was going to be a computer I still wanted it to be a good games machine!"

**Good progress was being made, but a decision by Jack Tramiel in late-1981 would see Albert and his engineers** working around the clock to finish the VIC-40 by the New Year. "Jack really wanted us to have something at the January CES in 1982. We worked like maniacs. The SID chip was a little bit behind schedule, but Bob Yannes was killing it and Bob Russell was trying to get the software done. Marketing did not learn about the VIC-40 until probably November. I think Jack was worried that they would get excited about this new product and not focus on selling the old stuff. I got the first silicon right before Christmas and then I found a bug in the video chip that wouldn't allow the sprites to smoothly move over the background. They had to redo the masks and run the entire chip through the process in the [chip] fab downstairs. They did that over the Christmas vacation. They got us the chip around the first of the year. We carved up a VIC-20 case to fit everything in and painted it up – it was insane!"

By the January 1982 CES, the VIC-40's name had changed and Jack Tramiel had received a demonstration of the 'C64' and approved its presentation at the show. "I think that Jack understood that if the presentation was mediocre you would never be able to win back that excitement. If the demonstration software wasn't right he would have probably pulled it from the show. I liked the name change since it distanced it from the VIC-20 – the C64 was going to be so far superior. I remember that CES very well – it was a whirlwind! We were introducing this product that we had just spent 18 months developing, and it was just fantastic. We showed two things. I remember one side of the booth was showing the C64 doing computer-like









» As you'd expect, this lights up when your Commodore 64 is turned on. Don't accidentally unplug it!

## C64 COMPARISON CHART

The key stats of the C64 and its UK competition

| | C64 | Spectrum 48K | BBC Micro | Amstrad CPC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK Launch Date | September 1982 | April 1982 | December 1981 | June 1984 |
| UK Launch Price | £350 | £175 | £335 | £249 (with green screen monitor) |
| Processor | 6510 @ 0.985 MHz | Z80A @ 3.5 MHz | 6502 @ 2 MHz | Z80A @ 4 MHz |
| RAM | 64 KB | 48 KB | 32 KB | 64 KB |
| Display modes | 320x200, 160x200 | 256x192 | 160x256, 320x200, 320x256, 480x500, 640x200, 640x256 | 160x200, 320x200, 640x200 |
| Colours | 16 | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| Sound | 3-channel synthesiser | Internal speaker | 3-channel sound chip | 4-channel sound chip |
| Keyboard | Typewriter | Membrane | Typewriter | Typewriter |
| Joystick Ports | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |






» Numerous games and applications were released for the Commodore's disk drive peripheral.

» The Commodore 64's keyboard is pleasingly chunky and very sturdy. Ours still works today.

> **"There was a lot of pressure to get [the C64] out because clearly the VIC-20 stopped selling once people knew that it was coming"**
> Albert Charpentier

stuff and the other side of the booth had a couple of C64s doing games stuff. I remember that it was being described as: 'A computer that can play great games.' When Jack saw the level of excitement that's when he went: 'Ok, we're going full-board for this thing.'"

Following the CES, Albert's small team became the nucleus of an industrious company-wide effort to get the C64 into production. "Basically the team was expanded, we got a lot of help from the manufacturing team in Santa Clara. Yash Terakura was very important in that role. He was moving [the C64] out of the lab – out of the prototype – and getting it into manufacturing in Japan. Charlie Winterble was running with our designs and working with the rest of the company so that we could manufacture it. Charlie was essentially a project manager for the whole thing. Commodore had a PCB line in Santa Clara where the C64s were built initially. I stayed up there for a few weeks while they brought it up and started making it in volume. Bob Yannes was with me on that as well. Bob Russell was responsible for migrating the software from the VIC-20 over to the C64. Details all had to be worked out now that we weren't just building one of them, we had to build a million of them."



» An essential device for anyone that loves playing games.

**As part of its production process, the C64 received a distinctive brown case, which Albert remembers as** being the most expedient design choice. "Yash Terakura took my PC board – that went right into manufacturing. Yash was involved in putting it in the case. Yash did work at the periphery during the PCB development, but his job was mainly to get the whole thing moving into Japan because the higher volume manufacturing of cases was all in Japan. The VIC-II video chip got pretty hot, so when we put it in we had a little foot that came down and that touched on the chip – this would act as a heat sink. That became part of the FCC shield. The only case that was available that we could actually use was the VIC-20 case, so we modified that. We had to go quickly, and it was available and the right size. We essentially gutted the inside, but the outside was pretty much the same."

The Japanese-born, US-educated Yash Terakura has memories of working on the C64 in both countries – first with Albert's team and then managing production of the C64's case and keyboard in the Far East. "I moved to the US to help finish the final production model C64. I helped lay out the PCB, locate and approve parts, and do testing. I was handling all aspects of C64 engineering between the US and Japan. The housing was made based on the production PCB. The mould was the same as the VIC-20 – just with a simple colour change – and it was done in Hong Kong, but the injection was done in Japan. I did work with a design engineer in Japan, Mr. Nishimura, on details such as ventilation and the locations of the input/output ports. Mitsumi was the [keyboard] supplier; we used the [VIC-20] keyboard."

Although he didn't have a hands-on role in the production of the C64, Jack Tramiel did manage its costs and curbed Albert's desire for more expensive parts. "I remember working with [Jack]; he'd come in every two weeks or so and we'd go over the bill,"recalls Albert. "It was always a fight because I wanted to put a better quality something in. He went through every penny on that bill. He was figuring on making millions, and I remember him saying to me: 'It's a million pennies, if you don't want a million pennies I'll take [them]!'"

In keeping with Jack's cost-conscious approach was a fateful marketing decision that forced Albert to pair the C64 with an slow disk drive. "[Marketing] decided to use the VIC-20 disk drive. [There was] a whole warehouse full and they were slower than hell! Right towards the end, we were forced to put on an interface for these drives so that they could sell them off. We wanted a higher speed drive but got shot down on that one."

Albert's recollections of the final stages of the C64's production are of the pressure to get the system released and the elation that followed. "There was a lot of pressure to get it out because clearly the VIC-20 stopped selling once people knew that it was coming. But we had a lot more resources by then so it was just that everything had to come together. I think the C64 finally got into production in May [1982.] I felt wonderful! I mean, you spend a couple of years of your life bringing something together that you dreamed about that has finally reached a point of reality – and people liked it!"

When asked to look back at the C64, Yash Terakura offers a succinct and humble analysis of the system. "The design was pretty much limited to the availability of electronic parts; we had to design with what we had and we had to make it cheap. It was fun designing a computer in the old days. I can safely say that I did my best at that time."

Albert Charpentier's final words on the C64 are to give credit to the late, and great, Jack Tramiel and reflect on the millions that the system defined home computing for. "Jack Tramiel simply gave us free reign to do whatever we needed to do, and we executed. I give Jack a lot of credit; he gave us that target price, which we had to hit. It was him who had the guts to say 64K. He felt he could still hit the price point that we needed to hit, which is obviously why we were fighting over pennies every day. The C64 just took the world by storm at that price. I really feel that it introduced so many people to computers that may not otherwise have been introduced to them as quickly as they were." *

**Thanks to Albert and Yash for telling the story of the C64.**

150 GREATEST GAMES EVER! NO.55

# JET SET WILLY

The stories behind Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy II have been told in previous issues but there has never been a Making Of Jet Set Willy. Martyn Carroll rights this wrong with help from the game's inimitable creator Matthew Smith



+++++ Press ENTER to Start +++++



There are many amazing things about *Jet Set Willy*. It's amazing that the game features 60 screens – its predecessor *Manic Miner* features 20 and that was seen as a great number at the time. It's amazing that the Spectrum version has been ported to 30 different platforms, from the Atari 8-bit to the Xbox 360. It's amazing how, more than 30 years after its release, the game still fascinates and influences its many fans, with every piece of trivia poured over and every line of code analysed. All this considered, perhaps the most amazing thing is that the game was nearly never finished.

"*Jet Set Willy* was all done at my mum's house in Wallasey," says Matthew Smith, recalling the 'hell' that was the game's development. "I was one of the directors at Software Projects but I didn't go in." Instead of developing the game in the offices of the firm he had recently formed with Alan Maton and Tommy Barton, 18-year-old Matt preferred to plug away in the bedroom where he created *Manic Miner*. Yet that game was developed in eight weeks; *Jet Set Willy* took eight *months*. Expectations were high – *Crash* called *Jet Set Willy*, "The most eagerly awaited game for any computer ever" – and the pressure of creating a worthy follow-up rested heavy on Matt. As the game's release kept slipping (it was due to be out for Christmas 1983) his fellow directors grew concerned.

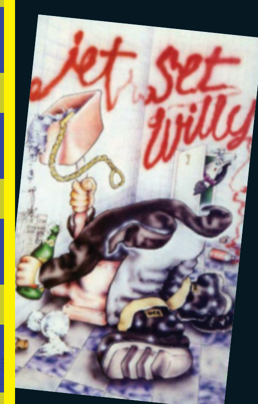
"Alan Maton would come to the house every day and sit behind me and say, 'Go on, get this thing done.'" Previously Matt has called Alan's coaxing a 'nuisance', but now he believes it was crucial in helping him finish the game. "What he did was what a producer does these days. Without that it might have ended up not getting finished, as I was coming to the end of my patience with it."

During the final few weeks of development Matt was holed up in his messy room, living on canned food which he'd eat straight from the tin. Alan would take him out to a local restaurant where Matt would often order several main courses. The sustenance and support eventually paid off and *Jet Set Willy* was finally finished and released in April 1984. There were celebrations all round. The game reviewed brilliantly and would go on to sell an estimated half-a-million copies. Matt had produced a classic but it had taken its toll and he would never complete another game.

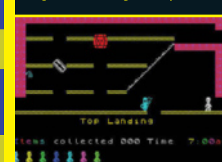
No-one could predict this, Matt included, when he started writing the game, fuelled by the success of *Manic Miner*. With no clear plan for the follow-up in mind he started coding random elements and out of this came one of the game's most memorable features. "The rope swings were the first thing I created for the game, while I was still working ▶



» Matt is his lair, circa 1983, working on his trusty Tandy TRS-80.




» The memorable cover art, created by Software Projects' regular artist Roger Tissyman.




"I spent a lot of time designing the rooms, trying to think up new ways of challenging players"

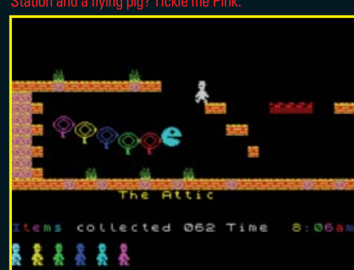
Matthew Smith




» [ZX Spectrum] Evidence that Matt didn't just throw the map together. Players glimpsed the lower path and then wondered how to access it.




» [ZX Spectrum] Battersea Power Station and a flying pig? Tickle me Pink.




» [ZX Spectrum] Strange things happen up in The Attic – not all of them planned.

## JET SET WILLY 101

■ Miner Willy must collect 83 items from around his 60-room property before he is allowed to retire to bed. Part-platformer, part-adventure game, *Jet Set Willy* expands on its predecessor *Manic Miner* by giving players the freedom to explore the map rather than tackle a series of linear screens.

150 GREATEST GAMES EVER! NO.55

# Nightmare Rooms

How to beat Jet Set Willy's toughest screens



### THE BANYAN TREE

■ It's just about possible to traverse this difficult screen, but you don't actually need to. What you do need to do is jump up the right side of the tree, as per the screenshot. This wasn't possible in the original release due to an errant solid block which a poke later took care of.



### THE WINE CELLAR

■ Reaching the secret passage at the bottom-right of this screen is fairly simple; collecting every bottle as you go down is much harder. Time your jumps so that you clear guardians and gaps at the same time. It's best to do a vertical jump to avoid the saw at the bottom.



### THE NIGHTMARE ROOM

■ Tiny platforms and multiple guardians ensure this room lives up to its name. It doesn't help that Willy turns into a winged pig, so judging your position is tricky. The trick is to face right with your wing up, as above, so you can rest on most platforms without getting hit.



### THE FORGOTTEN ABBEY

■ Just traversing this hellish screen is difficult, never mind collecting the cross. You have to time your jumps well, taking care not to hit the priests on the platforms above. Use a vertical jump to pass the blue priest on the bottom platform to avoid hitting the green one.



### PRIESTS' HOLE

■ Ascending the East wall is challenging and this is the toughest test, with the longest possible jumps required. A useful trick is to position Willy on the very edge of the platform, then try to jump vertically up and hold the direction as you fall, resulting in a perfect leap forward.



### UNDER THE DRIVE

■ Your timing has to be perfect to clear the Dalek and end up safely on the lowest yellow platform. The screenshot shows where the apex of Willy's initial jump should be. Oh, and that's not a Dalek: "It's a pastiche of a popular science fiction robot design," says Matt Smith.



## IN THE KNOW

» **PUBLISHER:** Software Projects
» **DEVELOPER:** Matthew Smith
» **RELEASED:** 1984
» **PLATFORM:** Various
» **PLATFORM:** Platformer



## DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

**DELTA TAU ONE**
**SYSTEM:** Tandy TRS-80
**YEAR:** 1982

**STYX** (PICTURED)
**SYSTEM:** Spectrum
**YEAR:** 1983

**MANIC MINER**
**SYSTEM:** Spectrum, various
**YEAR:** 1983

▶ with Bug-Byte," he says. "The ropes were created using wave numbers that went up and down, and I just fiddled with the numbers until it looked right. I really like the ropes – you just have to be careful not to let go while you're up in the air."

The backstory – Willy gets rich and parties with friends – clearly mirrored the author. Matt received £30,000 from Bug-Byte for *Manic Miner* and, believing more payments were due, he splashed the cash. When he struggled to get more money he parted company with Bug-Byte and formed Software Projects.

Willy, meanwhile, purchases a property in which to throw his parties, and after one raucous all-nighter he needs to get on his knees and pray to the Porcelain God. "Beginning in The Bathroom was all part of the plot," says Matt. "It was one of the first rooms I created. "

**The next room to be created was the adjacent Master Bedroom, where Willy's housekeeper** Maria (who was based on a Greek lady who lived across the road from Matt), prevents him from going to bed until he cleans up every discarded item in the house. With the beginning and the end of the game in place, and basic testing complete, Matt could begin to construct the rest of the rooms that would sprawl out from Willy's living quarters.

"A lot of the screens were based on what I thought a country house would look like. I designed the rooms as I went along. I'd do some coding and then design some rooms and then add them to the game and so on. The map was not planned out, it just came together. I spent a lot of time designing the rooms, trying to think up new ways of challenging players."

This method of creating rooms as required explains the off-kilter appearance of Willy's house. Some rooms are chaotic with multiple platforms, many enemies and several objects to collect, while others are empty and minimalist. Sometimes these contrasting rooms are next to each other. It's obvious, though, that Matt did plan routes through the house. For instance, the Banyan Tree screen is difficult to cross, requiring a series of perfect moves, but there's actually no need to as you can easily pass through the kitchens below instead.

"The rooms were packed into 256 bytes each, so I was able to have 60 screens altogether," says Matt. In fact, that number was supposed to be higher. "There should have been 64 screens but I couldn't get those last four working because my hard drive was wobbling about. The lost rooms were above The Mega Tree. It was supposed to be taller and have more branches. It never happened because I was typing the numbers in and they

» [ZX Spectrum] One of the more famous screens, its title inspired by the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* comic.




» [ZX Spectrum] The guards in this *Hunchback*-inspired screen were based on Ocean boss David Ward.




> "I never got any royalties from Jet Set Willy. It would have been better if I'd been independent"
> Matthew Smith



» Thanks to his partnership with Elite Systems Matt has finally earned some royalties from *Jet Set Willy*.

were getting corrupted. The rooms were never tested so they were only half-written. If I could look at the original code… but that's long gone."

It transpires that the missing room data was been overwritten by the hard disk driver on the Tandy TRS-80 Model 4 which Matt used as his development machine. But with just days to go before the game was due to be mastered he stopped looking for a solution and ditched the rooms. Other issues went unnoticed resulting in the infamous bugs that prevented the game from being completed. In Matt's own words the game "wasn't released, it escaped."

He did do some mitigation. "You started with three lives, like in *Manic Miner*, but then I realised that the game was too hard and upped it to eight. I also did a fair amount of play-testing. I spent a couple of days just on The Banyan Tree and I managed to make it through to the other side. But I never completed the game legitimately back in the day." If he had he'd have realised that it was impossible to collect several objects and Maria would never stand aside.

There was also the unpleasant 'death loop', where all of Willy's lives are snuffed out if he dies on entering a screen. Matt explains: "All of the characters have their positions reset when you enter the screen, which is why the death loop occurs. I knew it was going to be a problem, but thought, 'Well, it doesn't matter.'"

**The real showstopper was 'The Attic bug', were a rogue arrow in The Attic causes a domino** effect of problems elsewhere in the house. "An arrow shoots off to the left and corrupts the memory," says Matt, before revealing that there was no error checking routines in the code whatsoever. "There was a workaround where you did all of the other stuff before entering The Attic."

Software Projects released a series of pokes which fixed The Attic Bug and allowed all of the objects to be collected. There was another problem, however. "The first copies had *If I Were A Rich Man* from as the in-game tune. I created the music although I didn't write it originally. The owners said, 'Pay up!' They wanted £36,000 from us. We said, 'Nah!'" Future releases featured the *In the Hall Of The Mountain King* from *Manic Miner* instead.

*Jet Set Willy* may have achieved classic status, bugs and all, but for Matt the game is something of a sore point. Not only was the development a struggle but he never benefited from the game's success. "I never got any royalties from *Jet Set Willy*. It would have been better if I'd been independent. To be fair, most of the proceeds were going on wages. Software Projects was employing 20 people by this time."

Fans often debate about the best *Miner Willy* game and for Matt there's no contest. "Apart from the swinging ropes, which I really like, I always liked *Manic Miner* more. There were so many screens in *Manic Miner* that I was proud of. I don't like some of the screens in *Jet Set Willy*." He does talk highly of *Jet Set Willy II*, which was based on the extended version of the original game for the Amstrad CPC by Derrick Rowson and Steve Wetherill. "They included twice as many screens using compression. The whole of *Jet Set Willy* was in the sequel, with all the extras screens around the edge. There were even screens set in outer space…" Matt's voice trails off. He did try and produce a sequel but both attempts – *The MegaTree* and *Miner Willy Meets The Tax Man* – went unfinished. Happily, his clear, intelligible code for *Jet Set Willy* has enabled modders to jump in and create their own adventures. "It was a nice clean design," says Matt, proudly. "You can just look at the code and see how it all works, and hack into it and play around."

With more than 90 mods for the Spectrum, fans have been able to continue Willy's legacy, even if Matt wasn't able to. That's amazing. ★

**Thanks to Paul Drury for his help.**

# Conversion Capers

A whistle-stop tour of the official conversions released at the time



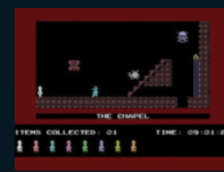
## COMMODORE 64

■ The C64 version is barely acceptable. Author Shahid Admad had a tight deadline and it shows. The stairs are a bit wonky, the ropes aren't quite right and it can't be completed (a bug-fixed version was released by fans in 2010).



## MSX

■ A top-quality conversion by Cameron Else, one of the two lads who won the competition for completing the Spectrum version first. Very faithful to the original and it plays brilliantly. The version for the Tatung Einstein is identical.



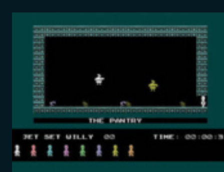
## COMMODORE PLUS/4

■ Based on the C64 version but much worse. The author obviously couldn't get the rope swings to work – their solution: just leave out all rooms with a rope! Other screens and many guardians are absent too.



## MSX (BEE-CARD)

■ This version was released in Japan by Hudson Soft. Game data had to be crammed onto the card so presentation suffers (no title screen, no room names), but it's otherwise complete. Playing speed is far too sluggish.



## COMMODORE 16

■ Same as the Plus/4 version but with even fewer screens (just 19 in total). This is more forgivable as memory was limited to 16KB unlike on the Plus/4. The Pantry, pictured here, is a replacement for The Nightmare Room.



## MEMOTECH MTX

■ Similar to Else's MSX version so it's very good. It even includes two unique screens to the right of The Security Guard – The Courtyard and The Front Lawn. One issue: collectable items don't flash, making identifying them tricky.



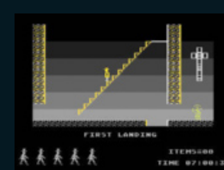
## BBC MICRO

■ A decent version for the Beeb by Chris Robson. It uses Mode 1 graphics so the colours are limited to four, but otherwise the game is faithful to the original. The Electron version is the same but only two colours are used.



## DRAGON 32

■ It's monochrome, but what it lacks in colour it makes up for in content, with 15 rooms unique to this version. It can't be finished, though! This version has been converted to the Archimedes and Spectrum.



## ATARI 8-BIT

■ Strangeness abounds on the A8. The rooms barely resemble the original and many of the graphics have been changed (Willy looks like a cowboy). Very difficult, very glitchy, very odd. Great Rob Hubbard music, though.

## AMSTRAD CPC

■ More of an extended edition than a conversion as it features 74 extra rooms, and some of them are very good – very Smith-like. This was later ported back to the Spectrum (and released on other machines) as *Jet Set Willy II*.



150 GREATEST GAMES EVER! NO.4

# ALEXEY PAJITNOV: CELEBRATING TETRIS

**It has been around for 31 years but its appeal never wanes. David Crookes talks to Alexey Pajitnov about your favourite ever puzzle game**

They say the best comes to those who wait and for Alexey Pajitnov, boy were they correct. He created *Tetris* deep inside one of the many rooms at the Soviet Academy Of Sciences in Moscow, but while it was released on 6 June 1984, it would be another five years before players took proper notice of it thanks to both the political situation which existed within the then USSR and an almighty wrestle to find which company actually held the rights to the game.

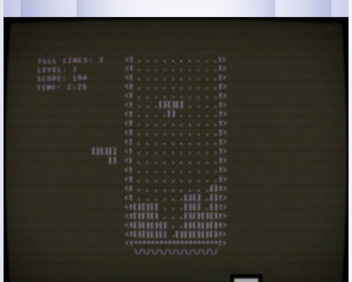
To go into the ins and outs of *Tetris*' well-trodden past would be to cast a shadow over the myriad achievements of this magnificent title. *Tetris* is, after all, the best-selling puzzle game of all time; it's a bona fide classic that continues to be promoted and sold and which has, in more than 30 years, become as iconic as games like *Mario*, *Sonic* and *Pac-Man*. It's not bad going for a game that is simply a collection of blocks, without a smiley face or pair of well-worn dungarees in sight. At the same time, it is a lesson in perseverance.

Certainly, the game hasn't become any less attractive over the years – your correspondent is typing these very words beneath the colourful glow of a stackable *Tetris* desk lamp. That lamp is just one of many eye-catching items of merchandise on offer, from questionably fashionable apparel to comfortable-looking *Tetris* cushions. And that's without even looking at the sales of the game itself: there have been 425 million paid mobile downloads on top of the 35 million cartridges that were bundled with the Nintendo Game Boy. Two million copies were sold for the Nintendo DS. Generation after generation take to this classic monolith of a game.

It means that the game has appeared on more platforms (a whopping 65) than any other title ever made and it has an entry in the Guinness World Records to prove it. That figure is constantly being revised and, indeed, it most likely already in need of an update given that the game has just appeared in yet another form in the guise of the Tetris Micro Card that can slipped into a wallet and whipped out on the bus. If you love *Tetris* (and you must do given that it is nestling nicely on your list at number four on your list), then there is no shortage of ways to play it.

And yet for all of that – and despite being available on-sale for four decades so far – Alexey still cannot quite put his finger on the reasons for the game's popularity, or even why you fine **Retro Gamer** readers have voted it in such large numbers. "I don't know," he says, laughing. "Probably because your readers love the game, that's why. But I think it is very important that it has been on the market for a relatively long time. There has been a lot of opportunity for people to try the game and enjoy it. Maybe that is why they vote for it."

Alexey began developing *Tetris* at the age of 29, bashing the keys of his Electronika 60 as a salaried employee in the USSR. He drew inspiration from a board game that he enjoyed as a child called *Pentominoes* which allowed players to manipulate 12 physical



» Alexey produced the first version of *Tetris* on a Russian terminal console called the Elektronika 60.



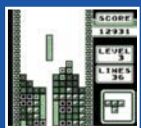


# THE FIVE TETRIS GAMES YOU MUST PLAY

Here are the definitive and most innovative versions of the game

### TETRIS

■ Nintendo's original version of *Tetris* was released for the NES, selling 8 million copies. But the Game Boy version is the one that most people will be familiar with. The portable's monochrome screen proved perfect given that the game relies only on distinctive shapes, play was also kept as simple as possible to give it mass appeal. Players could link Game Boys but the general aim was to clear the lines and achieve high scores.



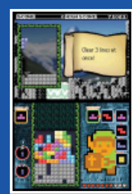
### TENGEN TETRIS



■ Tengen went head-to-head with Nintendo for the rights to make a *Tetris* game and eventually lost out, but that didn't prevent it releasing this version – for a limited time period anyway. Although it is pretty much identical to Nintendo's version, many consider Tengen's to be the best of the early offerings, primarily because of its simultaneous two-player mode and co-op play during which two pieces fell from the screen at the same time.

### TETRIS DS

■ It was inevitable a new Nintendo handheld would bring a new *Tetris* but with loads multiplayer modes for up to ten gamers, it was clear much effort had gone into this version. The addition of missions was inspired and the introduction of backdrops kept things fresh. What's more, tetrominos could be stored for future use and you could trace where blocks would fall.



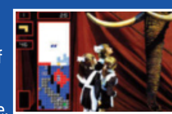
### TETRIS AND DR. MARIO



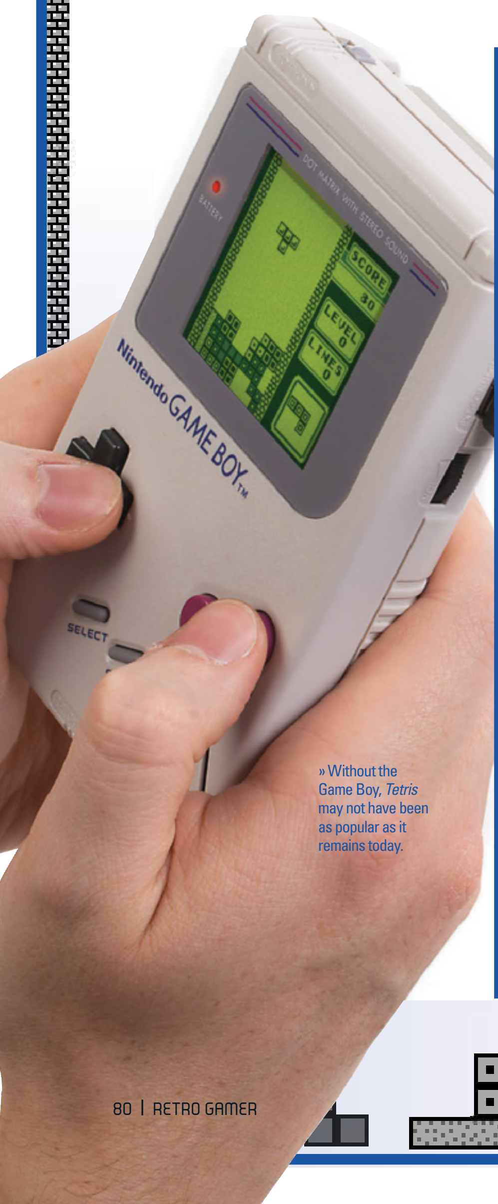
■ At first glance it appeared that this was a simple bundling of two separate games on one SNES cartridge but it wasn't. There was also a multiplayer mode which brought the two together in a unique and fun manner. Mixed Match would put two pals together, starting with a game of Type-B *Tetris*, then throwing in some *Dr Mario* before a Type B *Tetris* rounded things off in a battle for the highest score.

### SUPER TETRIS

■ With *Super Tetris* on DOS, there were two lovely twists. Not only did players have a limited number of tetrominos, bombs, lightning bolts, bubbles and other such power-ups would drop down and affect the rows and blocks in some way. To get more tetrominos, lines would need to be cleared in whatever way possible. The additions lent extra depth to the game and thankfully didn't ruin the core of the *Tetris* experience.



> "I wrote the game purely for fun, for myself, and I did it on something that is close to a mobile phone"
>
> Alexey Pajitnov




» Without the Game Boy, *Tetris* may not have been as popular as it remains today.

▶ pieces so that they would fit on a 8x8 grid without any overlapping. Alexey chopped the number down to seven in total (two of which were a reverse of each other) and he decided the pieces should be made up of four squares.

But by having the resulting tetrominos fall from the screen to make up tight rows that would disappear and deliver points, he was able to take an already addictive physical game and translate it to digital. And right away, he knew there was something special about it. "I wrote the game purely for fun, for myself, and I did it on something that is very close to a mobile phone with no colour, sound or graphics, just a 25x80 alphanumeric screen," Alexey says.

He had written other games at the computer centre ("*Tetris* was not the first game, no, but after it was released I did practically nothing else but design other games," he tells us) yet he says *Tetris* felt different from an early stage.




» [PS2] *Tetris Worlds* appeared on the GBA as well as the PS2 and the Xbox among others.

"I started playing it before I had finished all of the features and I couldn't stop. I realised that it would be a very good and addictive game and when I saw people around me couldn't stop playing it either I was very happy."

Since then the game has become one of the most addictive games ever created. In fact, there is a condition called Tetris Syndrome (or the Tetris Effect) which appears to alter the brains of those who play it for long periods of time. Sufferers say the game can affect the way they think and dream, with many finding themselves looking at blocks in the real world and thinking of ways to order them. And still they keep playing.

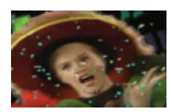
**T*etris* can lead to some odd behaviour among players, it has to be said. Take the newlywed from Blackburn** who was jailed for four months for refusing to turn off his mobile phone when asked three times while playing *Tetris* on a flight from his honeymoon in Egypt in 2002. Still, it sure does invoke passion among players. In 2009, for example, Harry Hong from America achieved the maximum score of 999,999 on the NES version of *Tetris*, after four years of intense practice.

It's ambitious stuff, but then *Tetris* is no stranger to startling achievements of its own: it became the first videogame to make it in to space in 1993, courtesy of Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr A. Serebrov during his trip to the Mir space station. It is also said to be the ultimate cure for those addicted to other things; an addictive antidote if you will. Just three minutes of game time with *Tetris* is believed to be enough to satiate cravings for a cigarette, according to scientists

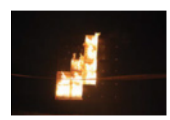
## TETRIS POP CULTURE



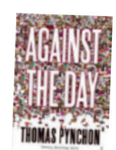
■ In the episode *Strong Arms Of The Ma* in Season 14 of *The Simpsons*, Homer draws on his experience of *Tetris* to pack his car.



■ The *Tetris* theme tune has featured in the movie *Snatch* and it's been remixed by the likes of Aphex Twin and Doctor Spin.



■ *Fire Tetris* became the latest art installation to be inspired by the game. It was displayed at Burning Man 2015.




■ *Tetris* was referenced in *Against The Day* by Thomas Pynchon. The surname of character Igor Padzhitnoff also sounds familiar…

■ Lots of merchandise bearing the *Tetris* logo has been made available to buy in high street shops around the world.



at Plymouth University. It may also be a cure for post-traumatic stress disorder, food cravings as well as drug addiction.

"It has been said that the game helps young people keep their attention and allows them to concentrate better and focus," says Alexey. "There has also been studies in Oxford about PTSD and the impact of *Tetris* and its use in health. That, to me, is a very good thing and it is a useful side effect."

But just why has it proved to be such a compelling a game? Alexey believes the game's simplicity has always been key to its success and that it has eased it into the public's consciousness. "Ten, or 15, maybe 20 years ago, it was still clear why the game had an impact," he says. "Back then people remained afraid of computers. They saw them as a new element in their life and felt they were too sophisticated. Some kind of barrier definitely existed that stopped people wanting to use computers for long hours, but *Tetris* was a new thing. There was a social aspect to the game and it also had an unusual interface that looked very simple. They were the elements which helped to destroy this barrier."

In many ways, the game was made available at the right time. Alexey ported *Tetris* to the PC in 1985 and it gained ground in Eastern Europe where the type and number of games that people could play were restricted by Soviet Union officials. It also appeared at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January 1988 where it came to the attention of Hank Rogers who would be instrumental in its promotion. When communism began to collapse the following year, the Russian state-owned exporter of computer hardware and software, Elektronorgtechnia, was able to better manipulate the world markets.

"*Tetris* showed the bright side of computers and that is how I explain why people wanted to play the game," Alexey says. "The game looked very simple; very innocent-looking and abstract." Nintendo snapped up the game for the Game Boy in 1989 and it transformed its fortunes. "*Tetris* has a level of deepness – it is not as shallow as *Tic Tac Toe*," Alexey says. "It could be ported to anything with a minimal screen and a simple processor. For portability it was just perfect."

**Its appearance on home computers also continued the phenomena. "It was on the C64 and lots** of other machines and it was collecting awards," Alexey says proudly. But who was playing? Alexey says *Tetris*' had a cultural impact in that women at the time appeared to be just as, if not more, interested in playing it.




"*Tetris* was for many years an addictive game which appealed to females [at the time]," he says. "I don't know how to explain that psychologically but that is the fact. There were fewer games to play at that time, I think, and it made *Tetris* exclusive. Everyone liked it."

But did everyone like everything? Sure, *Tetris* was one of the earliest games to break into the mainstream yet it had some repercussions. The familiar theme tune first used in the Spectrum Holobyte version of the game for the Apple IIGS and Mac quickly became known as the *Tetris* theme. It was the re-jigged as a Europop anthem by Doctor Spin, the pseudonym used by Andrew Lloyd Webber and the record producer Nigel Wright. The track reached number six in the UK singles charts.

Strangely (or perhaps not so strangely), this is not mentioned on the *Tetris* website as one of the game's historical landmarks but it was nevertheless a good example of how the game was becoming a cultural phenomena. It also cemented the game's Russian origins given the tune was based upon a 19th century Russian folk song called *Korobeiniki*. According to sources (okay… Wikipedia), the song tells of a meeting between a peddler and a girl and it describes a spot of haggling of some items in what it supposed to be a metaphor for courtship. Does this mean *Tetris* itself has a particular underlying message?

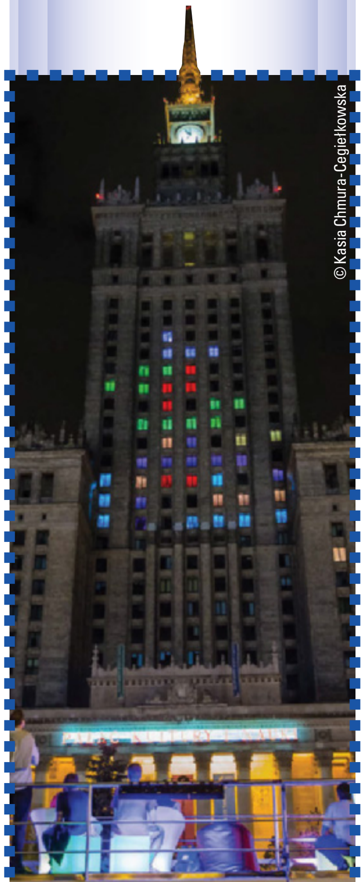
"*Tetris* doesn't have any message," says Alexey, putting that theory to bed. "That was often a question which drove me nuts because I don't have a message. I was just very happy that I was providing people with a really good time and players were having a lot of fun. It is why I don't like to speculate about the social impact of the game and the other stuff. I feel that every day when you feel happy doing something, you do the right thing and as soon as you spend very long hours with *Tetris*, I feel the game delivers something good."

Of course, one of the major reasons *Tetris* endures is that Alexey has never given up on it. Other programmers have moved on to other things but Alexey has kept his game in the limelight. Perhaps he had to – he did not make a penny from *Tetris* until 1996 – but the continued success and popularity of the game have made up for it since. Alexey co-founded The Tetris Company along with Hank Rogers, and the game becomes successful each year since it is re-tooled, re-packed and re-released. It has been enjoyed in more than 185 countries to dateand been played more than 23 billion times on Facebook. There's even talk of a movie.

For now, *Tetris* continues to enjoy the accolades. Although a number four slot in our Greatest Games Of All Time list is hard to beat, earlier this year, *Tetris* joined *Pong*, *Pac-Man*, *Super Mario Bros.*, *Doom* and *World Of Warcraft* in taking a place in the World Video Game Hall Of Fame at The Strong museum in Rochester, New York. "[*Tetris* has] become such a cultural icon that the game has even been projected on the sides of building gracing the skylines of cities around the world," said judges of the reason why it was voted ahead of *Space Invaders* and *Angry Birds*. But that's what *Tetris* is all about: small blocks, a simple idea but an ability to think big. "*Tetris* has defined my business life," says Alexy. "And I love that people still enjoy it." ✱



» Hank Rogers immediately spotted the potential of *Tetris* and he secured the rights to distribute it on consoles.



© Kasia Chmura-Cegiełkowska

## BLOCK PARTIES

**When *Tetris* was played on the side of a 29-floor skyscraper in Philadelphia in 2014, it was actually the realisation of a long-held ambition. "My dream in the early days was that *Tetris* would be available on a big screen for everyone on the street to play," says Alexey. "Seeing hundreds of people were playing it on the side of a building was the best time of my *Tetris* life."**

**He felt the same joy when the windows of the Palace Of Culture And Science in Warsaw were illuminated in July 2015 and players could try their luck clearing lines. Alexey and his business partner Hank Rogers are now looking to turn *Tetris* into an official eSport. "The game needs some adjustment but we are looking at producing a very good two-player version," Alexey says.**

**Until then, gamers appear content to use the 1989 NES version of the game for the annual Classic Tetris World Championship which is now in its sixth year (a PS4 tournament was introduced this time around). It attracted more than 47,000 online viewers and 500 physical spectators at the Portland Retro Gaming Expo in Oregon.**

# The History of Ninten






Arguably the most famous videogame company in the world, Nintendo has a long history. Join Damien McFerran as he digs deep into its past, present and future

**The games industry has undergone seismic levels of change over the past few decades, but since the Eighties one name has stood out as a constant in the ever-shifting** sands of interactive entertainment: Nintendo. At one point, Nintendo was a brand totally and utterly synonymous with videogames as a medium, such was the company's domination of the console market. Since the glory days of the NES we've seen the Nintendo rollercoaster dip and rise; systems like the SNES, Game Boy and Wii have achieved the kind of critical and commercial success that their rivals could only dream of, while missteps such as the Virtual Boy and the Wii U have proven that, despite its legendary status, Nintendo is just as prone to mistakes as any other corporation. Arguably one of the most influential companies operating in the videogame space, Nintendo has sold over 670 million units of hardware and 4.23 billion units of software to date, and despite the less-than-stellar performance of its most recent home console, is still a creative force to be reckoned with. With the company planning its next console and preparing to take its first tentative steps into the world of smartphone gaming, now is the perfect time to look back on its illustrious history and chart the highs and lows which have made Nintendo such an iconic and noteworthy challenger in the interactive entertainment arena.

## Before gaming

Nintendo may have joined the videogame industry around the same time as companies such as Sega, Namco, Taito and Atari, but it has a history that far outstrips these firms – and every other major player in the videogame arena. "Nintendo was founded in 1889 as manufacturer of playing cards," says Erik Voskuil, founder of Before Mario, a site devoted to covering Nintendo's early history. Established by Fusajiro Yamauchi in Kyoto, the company would focus almost exclusively on the production of Hanafuda cards for the first 70-odd years of its life. By the Fifties, Fusajiro's grandson Hiroshi had ascended to power and became acutely aware that sticking with playing cards was limiting Nintendo's potential for expansion. He signed licensing deals with Disney to maximise the appeal of its range, but by the Sixties sales had dipped dramatically, forcing a rethink. "In an attempt to grow business, Nintendo started branching out in a wide range of other markets – mostly short-lived endeavours including instant rice, a taxi company and opening a 'Love Hotel' – before settling on toys and games," explains Erik. It would be the arrival of Gunpei Yokoi in the Sixties that would take Nintendo in an exciting

# Nintendo Key Players

### The key figures from Nintendo's history



**FUSAJIRO YAMAUCHI**

■ Yamauchi founded Nintendo in 1889 as a playing card business. The company grew rapidly, expanding to nearby Osaka. Yamauchi would retire in 1929, leaving his son-in-law Sekiryo Kaneda in charge of the business. He died from the effects of a stroke in 1940.



**HIROSHI YAMAUCHI**

■ The grandson of Fusajiro Yamauchi, Hiroshi became the third president of Nintendo in 1947 and would guide the company away from playing cards and into videogames.



**SHIGERU MIYAMOTO**

■ The creator of some of the most iconic games – including *Super Mario*, *Zelda* and *Star Fox* – Miyamoto joined Nintendo in 1977 and his breakthrough success was the arcade smash-hit *Donkey Kong*.



**GUNPEI YOKOI**

■ Responsible for some of Nintendo's most successful ventures. He came up with the Game & Watch, Game Boy and produced many famous games. He was killed in a traffic accident in 1997.



**MINORU ARAKAWA**

■ Hiroshi Yamauchi's son-in-law and the founder and former president of NOA, Arakawa was instrumental in making the NES a success in the US. He is also credited with giving Mario his name.



**HOWARD LINCOLN**

■ Lincoln assisted Nintendo in its legal case against Universal Studios in 1981. He would join Nintendo in 1983, by 1994 he was chairman. He is the current CEO of the Seattle Mariners baseball team.



**SATORU IWATA**

■ Iwata started as a programmer at HAL Laboratory. In 2000 he joined Nintendo and two years later assumed the role of company president. Iwata sadly passed away after a battle with cancer.



**TATSUMI KIMISHIMA**

■ Nintendo's current president, Kimishima was president of NOA from 2002 to 2006. His background is in banking, but he has been with Nintendo since 2000.

▶ new direction. "Yokoi provided Nintendo with its first original toys and laid the foundation for what would eventually become known as Nintendo's approach to product design, practiced to this day," explains Erik. "It was no surprise that his design philosophy was embraced by Nintendo, as his inventions became million-sellers, earning the company lots of cash to fund further growth and more innovations." Yokoi's first best-seller – the Ultra Hand – was created during his initial role as a lowly maintenance engineer. "A lot of connections are often made to the early toys produced by Yokoi in the Seventies, such as the Ultra Machine," says Nintendo Life's Thomas Whitehead. "His role in catching the eye of President Hiroshi Yamauchi cannot be overstated, effectively kicking off the move into videogame entertainment." The Ultra Hand would be the company's first million-selling product, and the follow-up – a baseball pitching device called the Ultra Machine – would be even more successful. The period that followed was packed with invention and innovation, with Yokoi dreaming up products which seemed to capture the imagination of people of all ages. 1969's Love Tester gave young couples the means to 'prove the strength of their relationship', while the Kousenjuu series of lightgun toys allowed the normally withdrawn Japanese public to live out their cowboy fantasies in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. Despite some initial success, these products couldn't give Nintendo the long-term commercial stability that it craved. Given the company's penchant for electronic toys, it is unsurprising that when the home TV gaming revolution began, Nintendo was one of the first Japanese firms to put a product on the market. It distributed the Magnavox Odyssey in 1974, and would produce its own console – the Color TV-Game – three years later. It is at this point that an important figure enters the story. Design student Shigeru Miyamoto was fresh out of college when he joined Nintendo in 1977, and one of his first tasks was to design the casing for one of the Color TV-Game variants.

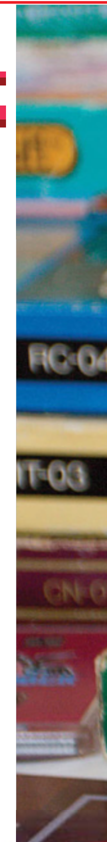
## Entering the arcade

While Nintendo's first forays into the world of domestic gaming were significant, the arcades were where the real money was to be made at the time. Titles like *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man* had turned into money-spinners, and Yamauchi was keen to muscle in on this lucrative market. Nintendo wasn't totally wet behind the ears when it came to location-based entertainment, though. "Nintendo's first arcade games, launched at around the same time as Atari's *Pong* in the early-Seventies, they weren't videogames but electromechanical lightgun games that incorporated film and later video footage," says Erik. "These were original games, based on Nintendo own very early lightgun toys for use at home, but had no commercial success." The company's first true arcade title was *EVR Race* – designed by Genyo Takeda, who is still with Nintendo today as a technology fellow – and clones of *Breakout* and *Space Invaders* followed. None of these gave the company the smash hit Yamauchi wanted, and 1979's *Radar Scope* almost proved to be the final nail in the coffin. The game had performed well in Japan but had flopped in North America – the market Yamauchi was desperate to crack – and Nintendo was faced with the prospect of disposing of unsold *Radar Scope* cabinets. As resourceful as ever, Yamauchi proposed using the inventory for a new title, and the relatively inexperienced Miyamoto was tasked with creating the concept. 1981's *Donkey Kong* was Nintendo's last throw of the dice, but thankfully it was a triumph and has gone on to become one of the most famous videogames of all time. "*Donkey Kong* was very important," states Erik. "It was a huge arcade hit that established the company as a worldwide player in videogames and put Nintendo Of America on the map. The game design by Miyamoto has been hugely influential in many ways, including being the first platform game to use a jumping character – a jumping character who evolved into one of the most enduring videogame icons." Erik is, of course, referring to Mario, who has gone on to become one of the most recognisable faces in entertainment.

## The Golden Years

*Donkey Kong* was a turning point for Nintendo, and elevated the company's status in North America – arguably the biggest market of them all for videogames. Home conversions quickly followed on the popular consoles of the period, earning *Donkey Kong* and its



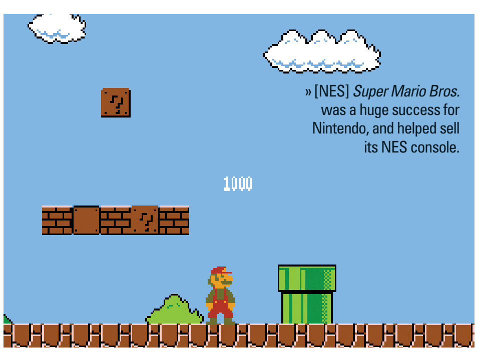






» Nintendo found success in its early years with devices such as the Game & Watch and tabletop systems.

> **“Entering the videogame market with a new system after the big crash of the early-Eighties was a risky decision”**
> Erik Voskuil

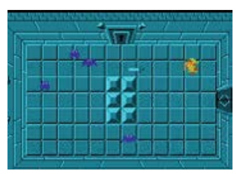
maker even more fame. Nintendo's next venture was with games you could effortlessly slip into your pocket. Inspired by the sight of a businessman idly tapping away at his pocket calculator while on the train to work, Yokoi created the Game & Watch line in 1980. While they used crude LCD visuals and were limited in terms of scope, the range was a massive commercial success and sold over 80 million units between 1980 and 1991. It also inspired a flood of copycat releases from the likes of Tiger and Bandai. "A lot of people were building battery-powered handheld game systems, but they tended to revolve around rudimentary display hardware such as grids of LED lights," says Rare's Paul Machacek. "Whilst the images on the LCD screens that Nintendo used were pre-baked rather than very low resolution software-driven pixels, they were immersive and packed tightly enough to take you beyond noticing such limitations and really get engrossed in the gameplay.

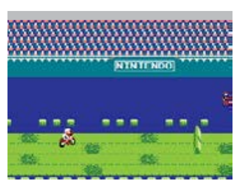


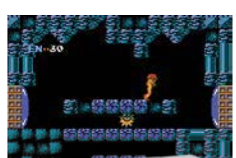

» [NES] *Super Mario Bros.* was a huge success for Nintendo, and helped sell its NES console.

The twin-screened units, preceding Nintendo's DS handheld by decades, seemed particularly futuristic at that time." Erik adds that gameplay was the driving force behind the success of this range. "They were playtested and fine-tuned until the result was a fun and challenging game," he says. "The graphic design and quality finish also played a role. They looked desirable and provided a lot of value, which attracted customers and made them come back for more." The Game & Watch was also notable for introducing the world to another innovation – the Directional Pad, or D-pad as it is now known. Used on the 1982 Game & Watch adaptation of *Donkey Kong*, the pad has since become an ubiquitous feature on pretty much every gaming controller you could mention.

Growing in confidence, Nintendo decided to push forward in the home console arena with a new piece of hardware. 1983's Family Computer – or Famicom as it was more commonly known – launched just as the videogame industry in the west was about to implode. The crash of 1983 destroyed consumer and retailer faith in home gaming, but thankfully it didn't reach the shores of Japan, where the Famicom became a commercial success. By the end of the following year, it was the nation's most popular home console. "Nintendo's first-party titles were a big attraction – *Super Mario Bros.*, *Zelda*, *Metroid* – combined with many fantastic third-party releases, such as *Final Fantasy*, *Dragon Quest* and *Mega Man*," Erik comments. "Nintendo was also lucky with the timing. Entering the market with a new system after the crash was risky, but





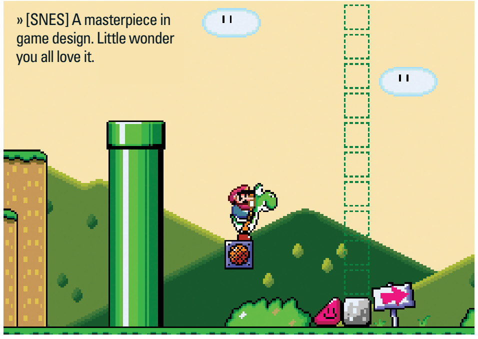





once it succeeded Nintendo had a monopoly for many years. In this period playing videogames and playing Nintendo were synonymous."

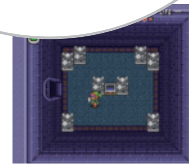
When Nintendo revealed its plans to repackage the Famicom as the NES for release in the west in 1985, many assumed this upstart Japanese firm was crazy. In North America, home consoles were seen as a dead end, but Nintendo persevered and soon enjoyed a near-complete domination of the US market – a mirror of its overwhelming triumph in Japan. It is during this time that the company began a relationship with tiny UK developer Rare. Paul – a Rare employee since 1988 – reveals that the company was set up to fully exploit the success of Nintendo's hardware in the US and Japan. "Just as Ultimate Play The Game had largely been a success in the UK and was not hugely known in those distant territories, so Rare was to conquer abroad where the NES was strongest, and not have the visibility in the UK that Ultimate did for a while," he remembers. In the days before Nintendo invested in Rare, the latter used the former as a sort of guide for quality. Whenever outside games were brought into the studio for inspection and analysis, Rare's founders – the legendary Stamper Brothers Tim and Chris – encouraged its staff to have a hands-on with Nintendo's offerings. "We largely only brought in other titles on Nintendo platforms in the early years because I think Tim and Chris wanted everyone to see that market, and understand what worked and why," continues Paul. "So we were all exposed to a sort of Nintendo ethos – the *Super Mario* series was the true 'North Star' that guided us."

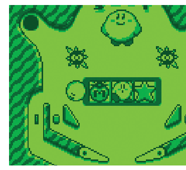
Nintendo would complement the all-conquering NES with the Game Boy in 1989, a handheld console which was a direct successor to the aging Game & Watch line. Another ▶

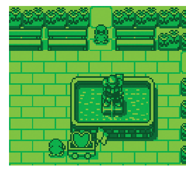


» [SNES] A masterpiece in game design. Little wonder you all love it.









Yokoi masterpiece, this portable system became a cultural icon and must-have gadget, with many comparing its popularity to that of Sony's Walkman. However, as the Nineties dawned it was becoming abundantly clear that Nintendo no longer had the global games market all to itself. Japanese rivals such as Sega and NEC launched viable challengers at the end of the Eighties– such as the Mega Drive and PC Engine – and these began to slowly but surely chew away at the market share of Nintendo's 8-bit system. In the US, this encroachment was felt especially keenly; an aggressive Sega attacked the NES via a combination of savvy marketing, licensed sports titles and arcade conversions, eventually managing to become the nation's best-selling home console – an event which would have been unthinkable just a few years previously. New blood was needed, and it came in the form of the Super Famicom, or Super Nintendo as it was branded over here in the West.

Regarded by some as Nintendo's best console and one of the most acclaimed home systems of all time, this 16-bit powerhouse played host to some of the period's most critically-lauded videogames. Hits such as *Super Mario World*, *The Legend of Zelda: A Link To The Past*, *Secret Of Mana* and *EarthBound* all followed, and when it became clear that 3D visuals were slowly overtaking 2D graphics in terms of popularity, Nintendo was smart enough to make sure that the SNES could stay the course. It introduced the Super FX chip with 1993's *Star Fox*, and gave the console a massive shot in the arm in its battle against the Mega Drive. "Everything came about because of a 3D demo I had developed for the Game Boy," recounts Dylan Cuthbert, former Argonaut staffer who worked on the iconic title. "Jez San, my boss at the time, was showing the demo around at the CES show in America and a Nintendo Of America exec saw it and realised the potential of new technology and hooked everything up very quickly to Nintendo Japan. They flew us to Kyoto and we had lots of meetings, out of one of which, the FX Chip was born." Dylan set up shop in Nintendo's Kyoto HQ for some time afterwards,

# Ten innovations Nintendo improved on

**How Nintendo helped shape the games industry**

### DIGITAL CONTROL
■ Joysticks were *the* input method for gaming of the Seventies and Eighties, but were too bulky to be used on portable devices. Nintendo came up with the D-pad and used it on the Game & Watch version of *Donkey Kong* – it has become an essential control method ever since.



### KIOSKS COULD BE USED TO PUT NEW GAMES ON OLD ONES
■ The Famicom Disc System is another Japan-only peripheral, and Nintendo introduced kiosks which allowed users to wipe discs and write new games to them for a reduced fee.



### WIRELESS DATA TRANSFER
■ The GBC came with an IR port on the top which was pretty much only useful for one thing – exchanging data in the popular RPG *Pokémon*. It was another example of Nintendo leveraging cheap and common tech in new and interesting ways.



### THE GAME BOY ADVANCE E-READER
■ Using special bespoke cards and the GBA e-Reader device, it was possible to access special content for certain games. Sadly the peripheral was not a success, but the curio lives on as a collector's item.



### THE GAME BOY CAMERA
■ Today, we're used to having a camera at all times thanks to smartphones, but back in the Nineties Nintendo caused a storm by releasing a monochrome snapper for the Game Boy. The pictures were terrible, but they have a strange appeal to them.



### MEMORY MANAGEMENT
■ PC owners are used to adding in RAM to improve performance, and Nintendo applied this to the N64. Demanding titles like *Donkey Kong 64*, *Perfect Dark* and *Zelda: Majora's Mask* worked with the 4MB RAM pack to offer better visuals.



### REWRITE, NOT FADE AWAY
■ The 64DD – or 'Bulky Drive' as it was known – never saw release outside of Japan, but the idea was genius. To combat the high cost of N64 cartridges, 64DD games would come on magnetic discs which were cheaper and could be written to.



### TOUCHSCREENS
■ Sure, touch panels existed prior to the launch of the DS, but Nintendo's handheld really popularised the technology, introducing it to a new generation of gamers and paving the way for smartphones and tablets.



### MOTION CONTROL
■ The Wii might have been underpowered compared to its peers, but the inclusion of motion control helped set it apart in the console war at the time. Nintendo opened up gaming to casual players and sold over 100 million Wii consoles in the process.



### AUTOSTEREO-SCOPIC 3D
■ The 3DS introduced glasses-free 3D to the masses in 2011, taking cutting-edge tech and planting it into the handheld. The New Nintendo 3DS refines the tech by using a camera to sense the position of the user's head.



## In the Know

■ The actual meaning of the name 'Nintendo' is open to interpretation, but a rough English translation is 'leave luck to heaven'.

■ Before videogames, Nintendo tried to take on Lego with its own range of building blocks, known as the N&B Block.

■ Nintendo was once the sole Japanese distributor of the popular game *Twister*.

■ Lawyer John Kirby – who helped Nintendo win the *Donkey Kong* court case – has a special place in Nintendo history. The character Kirby was named in his honour.

■ *Donkey Kong* was originally supposed to star characters from *Popeye*, but Nintendo failed to secure the licence and Miyamoto had to come up with a new concept.

■ Nintendo owns the Seattle Mariners baseball team.

■ Hiroshi Yamauchi was Nintendo president for more than half a century.

■ The iconic NES Zapper is shaped like a real gun in Japan.

■ Mario's voice has been supplied by actor Charles Martinet for 20 years.

■ Nintendo may be family friendly today, but in 1970 it produced a series of pin-up playing cards featuring nude women.

■ Current Nintendo Of America president Reggie Fils-Aime previously worked at Pizza Hut.

■ The amazing sound chip inside the SNES was designed at Sony, by PlayStation creator Ken Kutaragi.

■ Nintendo Of America produced its own magazine during the NES era named *Nintendo Power*, which only recently closed in 2012.

■ Nintendo's taxi service – called Daiya – was successful initially, but succumbed to pressure from labour unions and eventually closed.

■ The code-name for the N64 was Project Reality.

## Your favourite Nintendo controller




> **“The cost of games development was low and the teams small, yet each game was selling millions”**
> Dylan Cuthbert

and is ideally placed to explain what made the company such a magical place during this period. "Nintendo was a peak point," he says. "The cost of games development was so low and teams so small, yet each game was selling millions and at quite a high price. It helped it have a lot of freedom." Dylan also got the chance to work alongside the legend that is Miyamoto. "It was a lot of fun," he recounts. "We went to lunch with him every day for most of the development of *Star Fox*, primarily because he wanted to learn English, I think. We were quite a novelty for Nintendo at the time and probably the first group of 'gaijin' to be located there for so long." Argonaut and Nintendo arguably pushed the SNES to its limits, and today Dylan has a soft spot for the console. "It was simple, and fairly easy to do a lot of interesting things on," he smiles. "The sound chip was amazing at the time, giving games a richness that was beyond the simple sprites and colourful backgrounds." ▶

# Franchise Starters

Nintendo has created some of the industry's most enduring games






# The Decline

The success of the SNES was tempered slightly by the fact that Nintendo now had a powerful rival in the form of Sega, which had pushed Nintendo hard in the West. To make things more complicated, other companies were entering the arena with their own hardware. 3DO, Atari, Philips and Sony all made inroads during this time and Sega leveraged its arcade lineage to produce the 32-bit Saturn, which used CD-ROM for game distribution. Sony's PlayStation – a system born out of an earlier agreement with Nintendo which was cancelled in dramatic fashion when Nintendo decided to ditch Sony at the last minute – also utilised CDs, and was perhaps the most worrying rival for the veteran. Nintendo's new console – the Nintendo 64 – was announced around the same time but delayed until 1996, by which point both Sony and Sega had gobbled up many consumers. While its competitors switched to cheaper and higher-capacity disc-based media, Nintendo stubbornly stuck with cartridges, claiming that they avoided long load times and prevented piracy. While both of these points were true, carts were also expensive to produce and couldn't hold as much data as a disc, and many publishers turned their backs on the console as a result – notably Squaresoft, which switched development of *Final Fantasy VII* from the N64 to the PlayStation. To make matters worse, Nintendo's focus was weakened by the Virtual Boy, the company's most noteworthy hardware failure. Released in 1995, it tanked and Gunpei Yokoi apparently left the company under a cloud of shame, his legacy seemingly tarnished due to a single failure. He would be tragically killed in a traffic accident in 1997.

The N64 was host to some of the most influential videogames of the time, such as *Super Mario 64*, *GoldenEye 007* and *The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time*, but it failed to replicate the sales performance of the NES and SNES. While former rival Sega stumbled with the Saturn and eventually bowed out of the hardware arena with the Dreamcast, Sony was unstoppable, and its PlayStation became the NES of its era. As the next console war loomed, Nintendo had to deal with the presence of yet another challenger in the form of Microsoft, which announced it was entering the games arena with its own games console, the Xbox. Nintendo's 2001 offering, the GameCube, was arguably



» [N64] Many feel that *Super Mario 64* revolutionised 3D gaming.



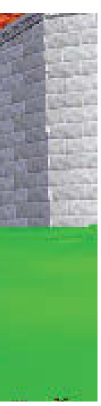
» Shigeru Miyamoto and Takashi Tezuka have been instrumental to the success of Nintendo.

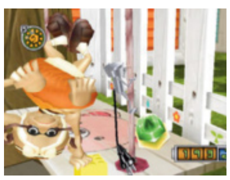
» [N64] The *Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time* highlighted the strengths of Nintendo's 64-bit console.

the one and only time that the company has bowed to industry trends and tried to produce hardware that emulated that of its rivals. Aside from using smaller discs and the odd-looking controller, the GameCube was dancing to the same tune as the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, but with three systems on the market that did the same thing, something had to give. The GameCube came in third after Sony and Microsoft's consoles, despite offering some amazing games, like *Super Mario Sunshine* and *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*.

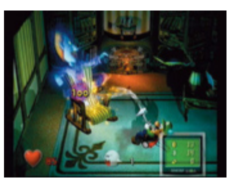
## Resurrection

Although its handheld Game Boy range remained dominant throughout the Nineties and early-Noughties, casting aside rivals such as the Sega Game Gear, Atari Lynx, Neo-Geo Pocket and Bandai WonderSwan, Nintendo was finding it hard to remain relevant in the home arena. However, its next home console would flip the industry on its head and ultimately emerge victorious in the next console war. The Wii – joined by Nintendo's already-successful handheld, the innovative dual-screen DS – established a new period of mobile gaming success for the firm. "I joined Nintendo UK the week that *Mario Kart Wii* was released," says former Nintendo UK brand manager Roger Langford. "At this point both Wii and DS platforms had already begun to take off and it was apparent from the initial sell-through of *Mario Kart* that the company was in uncharted territories." The titles Roger had to promote were indicative of the new direction Nintendo was moving in. "Like many others, I have grown up on Nintendo products and I was extremely excited to be involved with the company," he says. "I did not, however, get to work on titles such as *Zelda* and *Mario* straight away. Instead my time was focussed on many of the *Touch Generations* titles, such as *Brain Training*, *More Brain Training* and *Cooking Guide* – not what I had originally envisaged! But, to me, it was incredibly exciting, as we were marketing Nintendo product to families and to older demographics, some of which may of never even thought to play a game before. We had a product in the Wii that was accessible to the whole family and the DS had such a wide variety of titles we could appeal to the 55+ demographic as successfully as we could kids. We were very lucky to have such incredible products covering such a wide range of audiences at the time."





» [GameCube] *Chibi Robo* started off life on the GameCube and remains a surreal, yet delightful game.



» [GameCube] It didn't launch with a *Mario* game, but *Luigi's Mansion* was still fun to play on your GameCube.

» While the 3D could be gimmicky, the actual 3DS boasts some incredible games.



For Thomas, the company's ethos of marrying software with hardware really came to the fore at this point in time. "The funny thing is that this approach didn't seem prominent in the NES and SNES era, but arguably became more relevant with the N64, with iconic games like *Super Mario 64* utilising the controller and technology in amazing ways," he says. "Particularly since the Wii and DS era, this design approach of producing hardware and software in tandem has delivered some memorable, game-changing experiences. Nintendo made touch gaming popular before smartphones rose to prominence on the DS, and had millions of 'non-gamers' playing Tennis on *Wii Sports* or doing exercise with the Wii on *Wii Fit*. It ultimately benefits customers because this approach can deliver distinct, wonderful entertainment, and it benefits Nintendo as it helps the company to stand out and maintain its own identity against its rivals."

## Uncertain Future

While the Wii and DS have sold in excess of 250 million units combined, Nintendo found that the market had changed by the time it launched their successors. The rise of smartphone and tablet gaming has had a marked impact on the handheld arena, and while the 3DS has managed to shift more than 50 million units globally, it is way behind the performance of the DS, which clocked up three times that figure in its lifespan. "I feel smart devices have had a huge impact," says Roger. "DS really caught fire before smartphones were around and it was the norm to see people playing out and about. When smartphones arrived the DS became redundant, as it was more convenient to play apps on phones." The Wii U, however, has been a shocking dud for the company. "Timing can be everything, and when Wii U was released technology had moved on since the launch of Wii," says ▶

## Light Side

- It restored faith in consoles after the US videogame crash
- It was hands-on with third-party games, ensuring great quality.
- It popularised portable gaming with Game & Watch and the Game Boy.
- It kickstarted the trend for accessories, peripherals and hardware add-ons.
- It introduced touch and motion control to gaming.
- It showed the importance of strong mascots.
- It made retro gaming cool and accessible with its Virtual Console service.
- It never blindly rushes a game to market.

## Dark Side

- It monopolised the industry during the NES era.
- It introduced region locking, a practice it supports to this day.
- It stifled innovation by taking legal action against companies like Codemasters.
- It inflicted the headache-causing Virtual Boy on us.
- It used cheap packaging for many of its games.
- It was too slow to pick up on the online revolution.
- It's a little too keen to keep re-releasing the same retro titles.
- It ignored CD-ROM tech to stick with costly carts.




# Nintendo console history

Your instant guide to Nintendo's many consoles and how much they sold




▶ Roger. "The idea of the GamePad was and still is revolutionary, but I do not feel that a killer title ever nailed the use of it. With the Wii, *Wii Sports* was a great demo of how to use Wii and really set a positive benchmark for the system. Wii U never really had this."

Thomas feels that the Wii U is a great platform that was simply dealt a bad hand. "The more I consider the Wii U, the more I think it just got caught out by bad circumstances," he says. "I imagine at the design phase – when tablets were only just gaining popularity, the Wii was dominant – the idea of the name, GamePad and approach would have seemed right. Unfortunately the GamePad concept just wasn't exciting enough to many, and the controller also contributed to the system being too expensive. The graphical power of the console also meant that those with a PS3 or Xbox 360 won't have rated that aspect, while third-party developers of various types were starting to look at the more powerful technology of PS4 and Xbox One. It struggled to appeal to anyone beyond core fans. Nintendo systems sell at their best when they're affordable luxuries, cheaper and more creative than rivals. The Wii U was at a premium price when it launched and lacked a killer app, so only dedicated fans were willing to take a punt."

Nintendo is already looking to its next challenge. First up is a move into smartphone gaming. It's also working on its next system, dubbed the NX, which is rumoured to be a fusion of home console and handheld. While many fear that Nintendo's smartphone venture and the abandonment of the handheld market could be seen as grim tidings for the veteran, Thomas has a positive outlook. "I like the fact it's taking its time with *Miitomo* – its first mobile app. All roads point to NX and key releases on smartphones, and if both work together there's potential for iOS and Android to make the company a lot of money while NX maintains the dedicated gaming business. Regardless of its lows, Nintendo has brand power and recognisable IPs. Those trump cards can see Nintendo make a comeback. Let's not forget times were a little tough in the GameCube era, and Wii and DS changed the whole picture – when Nintendo misreads trends it can often recapture them. I think 2016 could be hugely exciting." Can Nintendo really bounce back to greatness when the playing field has changed so much? "I seem to remember such a question being bandied about ten or so years ago and then they launched the DS and Wii," chuckles Paul. "I'd watch what they do next with great interest." *

*sold to date

# CIVILIZ

**CIVILIZATION IS A GAME OF AMBITION AND SCOPE CREATED BY AN AFFABLE AND INTELLIGENT DESIGNER. STACE HARMAN TALKS TO SID ABOUT HOW HE BUILT GAME THAT CONTINUES TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME**




## CIVILIZATION 101

■ Although *Civilization* wasn't the first turn-based strategy game, it's certainly one of the most expansive. You're not only attempting to create a sprawling empire from humble beginnings, but are also have to deal with revolutionary changes as you play through new eras and gain access to new and exciting tecnology. It's reach can be seen in numerous other games, and it has gone on to spawn several sequels, two of which, also made your final top 150.

**Sid Meier's *Civilization* starts with the humblest of beginnings. Stood at the dawn of a new world and a new people, players are faced with a small seed of possibility** from which great things can eventually grow. They start surrounded by blackness, requiring a leap of faith to move that single settler unit into the dark unknown and take that first decision to found a city in unfamiliar territory. All the while, the surrounding darkness looms, representing both ominous threat and promising opportunity as units armed with rudimentary weapons are sent out in all directions to uncover the secrets of virgin territory.

No matter how many times you've ventured out to push back that fog of war, there's something thrilling about starting anew. Armed with knowledge from previous attempts to write your civilization into the annals of history, there's always a different set of challenges that come from a randomised start position, the distribution of resources and the relative proximity of potentially temperamental neighbours. What remains constant throughout any game of *Civ* is the desire to see how the world turns out this time around.

This mix of challenge and great potential that *Sid Meier's Civilization* presents to its players was similar to that faced by the game's titular creator, as he attempted meld combat and exploration with resource management and diplomacy. By the game's launch in 1991, Sid was already something of a household name having developed a series of vehicle simulators for MicroProse, the company he co-founded with 'Wild' Bill Stealey. Sid had also created adventure title *Pirates!* and management sim *Railroad Tycoon* to which his name was added to assure the company's fanbase of his personal involvement and that, over time, has come to be a mark of quality. Nonetheless, *Civilization* represented a hugely ambitious undertaking; one for which there was presumably a grand masterplan, meticulously conceived and executed to the letter.

"In a lot of ways, we made it up as we went along," laughs Sid. "One of the big questions was how far can we push this system without it breaking and I think the cutoff was open for quite a while. It turned out that we found ways to allow you to get up to the Modern Era and then it became, 'Well, where's the stopping point?!' We let the gameplay drive the design and we were able to find ways to get this sense of advancing through time and of technology improving."

This feeling of advancement and progress was achieved through a canny layering of complexity that starts with those humble beginnings and, slowly, but surely, stacks one decision atop









# ATION






» [PC] Sid Meier himself makes an appearance in the game, as the bearer of good news when new technology advancements have been discovered!

another. Before long, you're juggling the myriad tasks required for the expansion of your own empire alongside managing the expectations and demands of others. This layering was itself built upon the success of the experimental approach of Sid's *Railroad Tycoon* and the discovery of how much fun it was simply to have several different systems working together at the same time.

Taking inspiration from the groundwork laid down by other popular titles of the time, such as *SimCity* designed by Will Wright, and *Empire* created by Walter Bright, Sid conceived of a way to combine the moment to moment exploration and positioning of units with the broader, hands-on approach to entire systems, technologies, and philosophies that would shape your civilization over a longer period.

"Ideally we are giving you interesting problems at every time scale and we think that's kind of what 'one more turn' is all about," says Sid of the phrase that has come to be the *Civilization* series' unofficial tagline due to the compelling way that it swallows evenings and entire weekends.

"It's that anticipation of different things that are coming up and that your mind is spending most of its time in the future of the game. If we have you imagining what might happen on different fronts then we're really drawn you into the game. That was really the goal, to keep interesting things happening at a number of different levels."




» [PC] Never a dull moment when your every move can uncover a barbarian village, a bountiful coastline or a hostile civilization.

# GUNS VS BUTTER

**Whether peaceful builder or marauding despot, there are some technological advances that your civilization simply should not be without**

### THE WHEEL



One of the earliest discoveries is also one of the most important. Essential for advancing engineering, it is the advantage that the Chariot offers that makes this a must for warlords.

### POTTERY



Agricultural advances fuelled the growth necessary for a hamlet to become a mighty city and with pottery came the Granary to aid sustenance. Chariots are useless if there's nobody alive to use them.



### GUNPOWDER

Gunpowder grants access to the Musketeer who represents a powerful aggressor and acts as an excellent defensive unit. Of course, where's there's gunpowder, there's also Cannons…

### THEORY OF GRAVITY



Aside from practical implications, the Theory Of Gravity paves the way for Isaac Newton's College. This establishment boosts the production of Science in Libraries and Universities by 66 per cent making it a must have for tech-heads everywhere.

### SUPERCONDUCTOR



This is a prerequisite for possibly the most essential military installation in all of *Civ*: the SDI Defence. As the only protection from late game nuclear warheads, it's vital to have constructed one to ward off rival leaders' invasion efforts.

### SPACE FLIGHT



The ultimate expression of technological ascendency, Space Flight makes possible the research of the Apollo Program and triggers the Space Race. Leave leaders to their petty squabbles and fly to the stars to colonise a new planet…

> "When we made the switch to turn-based it really clicked"
> Sid Meier

Sid was also determined to offer an alternative to a previous generation of games that he felt required players to be "basically pretty destructive" due to them revolving around "blowing things up". Instead, he wanted to focus on "building things and finding satisfaction in creating your own story" and while It's true that a game of *Civilization* can end in nuclear annihilation, it takes an awful lot of building, construction and creation to get to that point!

Nonetheless, these noble aims were driven primarily by Sid's underlying desire to create the kind of game that he would want to play. In 1991, without the every present din of the internet determining what is en vogue and free from the shackles of prohibitive production costs and the stifling affect that can have on design and risk-taking, Sid and design partner Bruce Shelley were more or less freewheeling. As such, Sid would create builds that implemented new features and Shelley would test them and discuss his feedback with Sid, the former exploring the game to a depth that the latter could not.

These two men working side by side with an artist were what much of *Civ*'s year-long development looked like for a long time. As such, they made the decisions that they felt were right as designers but also as players without the benefit of focus testing or huge teams of playtesters, nor the option of a quick fix if something was discovered once the game was released.

"Looking back on it now it was frightening and I think in a lot of senses we really didn't know any better," says a self-effacing Sid. "We put it on that floppy disk and sent it out into the world and for weeks there was silence. It's not like we had the internet and the feedback that comes from that; it would take six months before we got information to even think about putting out an update to the exploits that might have been discovered.

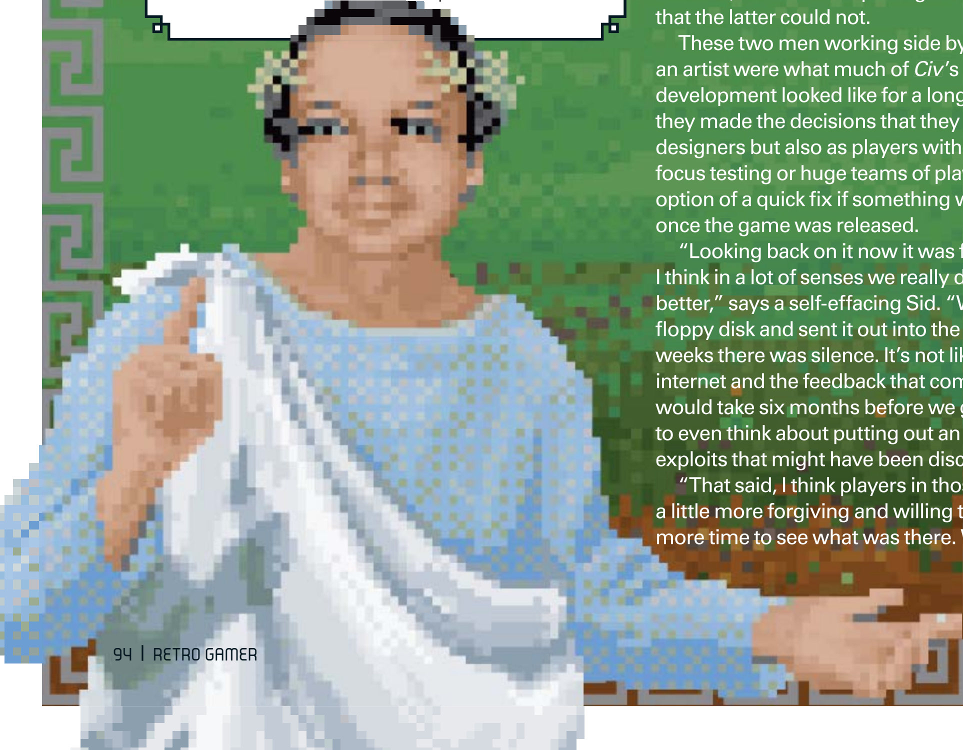
"That said, I think players in those days were a little more forgiving and willing to invest a little more time to see what was there. We had the advantage in the early days that there might only be four strategy games coming out in a year and so we pretty much had your attention for three months when we brought out *Civ*."

**This was just as well, when you consider that the manual for *Civilization* weighed in at around 130 pages long. Written by Bruce Shelley and encompassing not** only game mechanics but also an overview of the accomplishments of human race, including its economic models, divergent political standpoints and military strategies, it made for interesting reading even outside of the scope of the game. *Civ* was designed to enable players to jump right in but any serious minded *Civ* player will have dipped into that manual at some point and as well as calling Bruce a "wonderful collaborator", Sid also credits his manual with "making the game more interesting and feel more weighty as a whole."

Even if you have read that large manual cover to cover, *Civ* players know that the game's greatest lessons are learned along the way, with experimentation yielding occasionally unexpected results. It was a similar story with *Civ*'s development, with early prototypes created that trialled a mix of systems and features before settling on the final form.




» [PC] Certain governments types lend themselves to particular strategies: it's tough to maintain a large standing army in a Republic.



# KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR

**Forewarned is forearmed, as they say, and politics makes strange bedfellows. It certainly pays to know the usual suspects that you may find yourself sharing a continent with as understanding their temperament could be the difference between living in harmony and all-out war**



### ALEXANDER THE GREAT

■ Hardly modestly named, but he does have an astounding military track record and an impressive shock of blond hair to back it up. Alexander is likely to offer you peace and then aggressively expand into your territory anyway.



### GENGHIS KHAN

■ A ruthless leader, Genghis' lust for rapid expansion through bloodshed is evident right from the off. He favours conquering multiple rival nations over establishing stable infrastructure and is an out and out menace, albeit one that's fun to play as!



### JULIUS CAESAR

■ A mix of contradictions, Caesar defended the rights of his people while destroying the Roman Republic before being assassinated for his troubles. *Civ* Caesar is a capable leader who balances expansion and development with bloody conquest.



### MAHATMA GANDHI

■ A skilled politician and spiritual leader, Gandhi successfully campaigned for peace and independence for India. Likely to favour peaceful expansion over bloodshed, Gandhi has a keen eye for tech and will be one of the frontrunners in the space race.



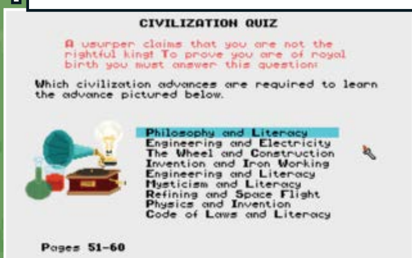
### NAPOLEON

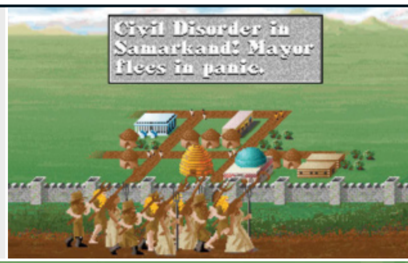
■ A ambitious politician, Napoleon's strength is nonetheless drawn from his military prowess. An expansionist, it may be possible to strike a reciprocal relationship with this leader. Contrary to popular belief, he's really not that short!

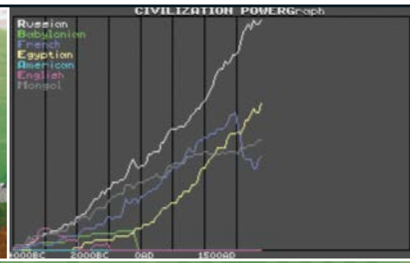


### SHAKA

■ The first king of the Zulus and a formidable conqueror of ill-prepared nations. Shaka looks a smiling, ally but underneath wears the scowl of a ferocious tiger. Not too hot on research, you can probably outgun him if you survive the early encounters.




» [PC] The 130-page instruction manual also served as a form of copy protection; answer correctly with its aid to continue playing!

Sid reveals how, initially, the map was much larger but that led to too much downtime between noteworthy events, and how he experimented with a model based more closely on *SimCity*'s idea of zone control, which was soon dismissed for being too hands-off. Perhaps the most fundamental feature to be settled upon was the switching of *Civ* from a real-time game, to a turn-based one, a move that had a profund impact on the game. "When we made the switch to turn-based it really clicked. You really felt in control and invested in everything that was going on," recalls Sid.

It's this feeling of being a master of your own destiny despite the huge scope and scale of a game that spans thousands of years that is one of the many appealing factors of *Civ*. It's meticulously balanced to ensure that you rarely feel overwhelmed and significant work as gone into tuning its systems to ensure that no one part is overcomplicated or obtuse.

Combat isn't laden down by complex special abilities or the need to establish attack or defence formations, while resources, units, buildings and advances are determined by producing a clearly labelled number of the prerequisite game currency, be it food, shields or science. As Sid reasons, "We wanted the individual systems to be very clear and for the interest to be in how they interact with one another. We wanted players to understand developments rather than be in a position of, 'What just happened?' It's no fun in a game if you feel like you're trying to catch up with what's going on."

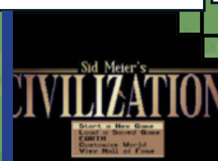
**Aside from some inexplicable decisions made by the whimsical AI leaders who seesaw from being your best friend to your enemy, *Civ* succeeds in this goal.** Later iterations have explored different systems and prioritised a variety of new mechanics but the balance of the title as a whole has been maintained.

Going back to play the *Civilization* brings back a lot of memories but it also reveals how well rounded that 1991 title was and how solid a base it provided for the continued evolution of both the franchise and 4X gaming as a whole. Clearly, there are many reasons that it's so fondly remembered.

Like the start of the game that bears his name, Sid is humble, saying only that it is "a good feeling" to know that the series is so highly regarded, before going to on to sum up how it feels to be the man responsible for its creation.

"*Civilization* has created a community of like-minded people talking about their experiences and the fact that it's still out there, nearly 25 years later is really a tribute to the community. The community has put as much energy, creativity and ideas into it as we have and now there's a whole language of ideas that is part of the *Civilization* community. It's brought a lot of people together and that's very gratifying." ★

» [PC] Attempting to research every technological advance is a fools errand, it's better to trade knowledge with other leaders or just simply take it by force.




## IN THE KNOW

» **PUBLISHER:** MicroProse
» **DEVELOPER:** Sid Meier
» **RELEASED:** 1991
» **PLATFORM:** Various
» **GENRE:** Strategy



## DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

**SPITFIRE ACE**
**SYSTEM:** VARIOUS
**YEAR:** 1982

**SID MEIER'S PIRATES!**
**SYSTEM:** VARIOUS
**YEAR:** 1987

**SID MEIER'S STARSHIPS** (PICTURED)
**SYSTEM:** VARIOUS
**YEAR:** 2015

# THE ARCADE PIONEER

## The Story of Yu Suzuki

There aren't many designers that could claim to have done it all, but Yu Suzuki just might be able to. We caught up with him to look back over his career and find out what's on the horizon…




» [SG-1000] Yu Suzuki's first game, *Champion Boxing*, was developed for the decidedly low-tech SG-1000 hardware.




» [Arcade] Most of Suzuki's games have been simulations of some kind, but *Space Harrier* was pure fantasy.

**It's hard to imagine what videogames would be like without Yu Suzuki. It'd be a world in which *Hang-On* didn't** introduce ride-on arcade games, where *Virtua Fighter* didn't kick off the 3D fighting genre, and where *Shenmue* never revived the QTE mechanic. There's a reason that he's one of the most renowned creative forces in the business, and one of the men most crucial to Sega's arcade dominance. But when we asked Suzuki himself when he realised that he wanted to design games, his answer caught us off-guard: "After I joined Sega."

Suzuki had wanted to be an elementary school teacher when growing up, but that all changed when he discovered computers. "My first computer was a self-made Z8," he tells us. "After that I bought an NEC PC-8000 personal computer." The machine was a surprisingly capable piece of gaming hardware, but still didn't lure Suzuki into his eventual career – he was simply interested in working with computers. "I was looking for a job as a system engineer, and while applying for a job at all the big computer companies, I thought I should also try and apply for at least one game company, and I chose Sega for that. When I interviewed with Sega, I found the company itself very attractive, so I decided to go with it."

Fortunately, despite falling into the job only semi-intentionally, Suzuki took to it quickly. After writing *Champion Boxing* for a low-powered arcade board based on Sega's oft-forgotten SG-1000 console, he was soon able to play with bigger budgets and state-of-the-art hardware. "It was pursuing something new, and a challenge which I became thoroughly engrossed in," he recalls. "It was not only very fun, but also gave me a great sense of accomplishment."

It was here that Suzuki delivered his first major hits, a quintet of arcade releases that created a 3D effect using 'Super Scaler' technology. Suzuki himself had specified the design of the board involved: "Super Scaler was a term that was mainly used for hardware processes and such, but because I had requested the system board that Sega launched at the time ▶






"While applying for a job at all the big computer companies thought I should try and apply for one game company, and I chose Sega for that"
Yu Suzuki



» [Arcade] *OutRun* was inspired by a road trip, not to mention Suzuki's love of Ferraris.



» [Arcade] Suzuki had always designed in 3D, and *Power Drift* was the logical conclusion of his racing efforts with sprites.



## YU SUZUKI BY THE NUMBERS

**Key figures about the celebrated developer's career**

**45**

■ The number of games Yu Suzuki worked on as director or producer during his first 20 years at Sega.

**32KB** ■ The size of Yu Suzuki's first arcade fighting game, *Champion Boxing*.

**1** ■ The number of games Yu Suzuki worked on as director or producer during his post-AM2 years at Sega.

**1 in 100**

■ The number of programmers Yu Suzuki claimed could get maximum performance from the Saturn.

**$47,000,000**

■ Lowest reported figure for the production cost of *Shenmue*.

**164MB** ■ The size of Suzuki's last fighter, *Virtua Fighter Evolution*.

**$6,333,295**

■ The amount of money fans pledged towards the development of *Shenmue III*.

▶ to be designed with multiple CPUs and back end DSP compatibility, there was a need for a multiprocessor that would be able to effectively use this hardware," he explains.

*Hang-On* was the first of these in 1985, though its scaling was somewhat overshadowed by the innovative motorbike controller of the deluxe cabinet, which had to be leaned to turn. That was followed by *Space Harrier*, the fantasy shoot-'em-up. *OutRun*, the iconic Ferrari racer was next up in 1986, and *After Burner*, a *Top Gun*-inspired aerial combat game followed in 1987. Finally, *Power Drift* arrived in 1988, challenging players with its undulating courses.

"I don't know about which one I am most proud of," Suzuki tells us, "but I remember *Power Drift* as one of the games that used the multiprocessor. After that, if I include hardware there was the Model 1 and the Model 2 titles like *Virtua Fighter* that also made use of the multiprocessor." If it seems like Suzuki is skipping ahead, it's because he began to spend more time as a producer following the release of *Power Drift*, overseeing various arcade and home console projects within Sega's AM2 department. His output as a director was reduced accordingly, though he did manage to direct *G-LOC: Air Battle* and *Strike Fighter* before moving on to the 3D hardware mentioned.

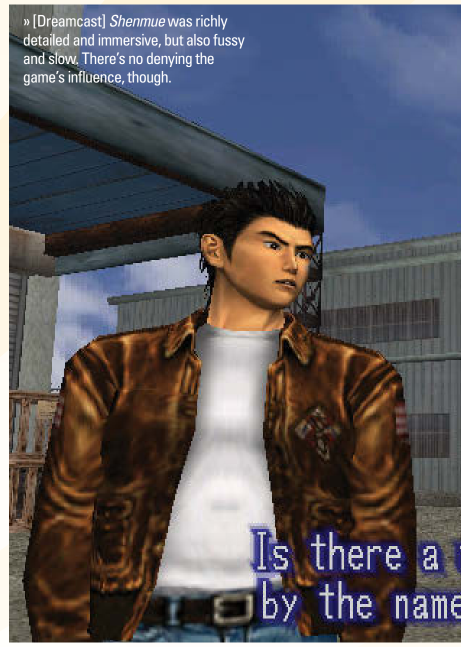
**V*irtua Racing* wasn't the first game to the polygonal racing party, but *Virtua Fighter* was** the first fighting game to utilise 3D visuals. Surely that must have been a challenge? "There was nothing I perceived as being especially difficult, but there were three big problems that needed to be overcome," Suzuki replies. "First of all, because they included body movement and collision detection, the amount of 3D calculations needed was huge, so we needed to think of a way to get the fastest possible processing and to speed up the optimisation."

"Secondly, this was the first game in which motion design was needed, and the staff was disputing whether it was more of a programmer's job or more of an artist's job," he explains. We've heard similar stories from the early days of 3D visuals – programmers designing animations on joysticks, and the like. "Because no one had any experience in doing motion design, it took trial and error to find the right work flow." So far, these sound like standard game development stories, but we couldn't help but be floored by what we heard next.

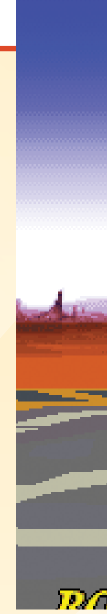
"Our third problem was, none of us had any experience in 3D game design and we couldn't use textures, so we had no choice but to rely on the quality of the movements to make the game appealing. But the person I convinced to take the role of motion designer had no experience with martial arts, so the movements ended up looking fake and devoid of realism. That was the point where I gathered all the designers and made them take martial arts courses, prohibiting them to do desk work." Surely that's some kind of joke? No, apparently not. "I established a process where only the ones that came to have a sufficient understanding of the movements involved with punching and kicking could return to work at their desks." It's not the first bizarre Yu Suzuki tale we've heard, and this seems like a good juncture at which to enquire about certain other stories we've heard. Were they true? "And what would you be referring to there? It's probably mostly all true," comes the rather opaque reply.

*Virtua Fighter* found huge success in arcades, particularly in Japan, and the sequels became Suzuki's primary arcade concern for the rest of the Nineties. While he continued to work as producer on other arcade games, Suzuki's next directorial work was a console game – the epic RPG *Shenmue*. In its early days, it was a Saturn project, and a *Virtua Fighter* spin-off at that. But the ambitious project soon took on a life of its own, as Suzuki explains. "During work for the Saturn, the Dreamcast project became a reality, and they were looking for a big game title to push the console (RPG's were especially high in demand at the time)," he explains. "Based on

> "There was nothing I perceived as being especially difficult, but there were three big problems"
> Yu Suzuki



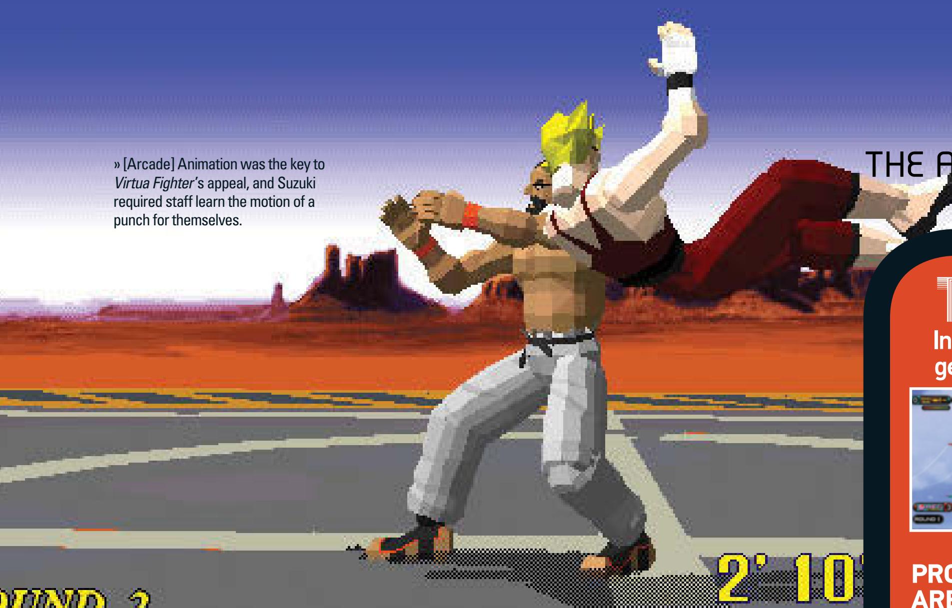

» [Dreamcast] *Shenmue* was richly detailed and immersive, but also fussy and slow. There's no denying the game's influence, though.



the research conclusions at that time, I decided that it would be profitable to make the switch to Dreamcast."

Switching to the new console had a number of benefits for the project. The open world structure and advanced visuals were far more suited to a machine of the Dreamcast's power, but a lot of work had already been done on Saturn and would need to be redone for Dreamcast. This massively extended the length of the project, not to mention requiring more manpower. "The number of people working on the *Shenmue* project at any given time would fluctuate, but personnel numbers at their peak reached over 300 members," he tells us. "It was a large project, so the biggest challenge was to manage the people."

The scope of the *Shenmue* project is hard to comprehend until you realise just how much detail went into every aspect. "During *Shenmue*, we had a situation in the Warehouse District where all of the characters suddenly disappeared on us. The whole of the characters appearing in the *Shenmue* series had the data and AI for their daily lives already



» [Arcade] Animation was the key to *Virtua Fighter's* appeal, and Suzuki required staff learn the motion of a punch for themselves.

## THE WILDERNESS YEARS

**In his later years at Sega, Suzuki began to encounter trouble getting games to release – here are three notable casualties**



### PROPELLER ARENA

**YEAR:** 2001
**PLATFORM:** Dreamcast

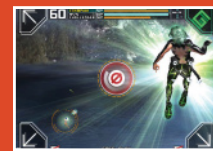
■ Suzuki was the producer of this combat game, which was intended as one of the Dreamcast's last releases. The game was in an advanced stage of development – seemingly complete, boasting features such as online play – but was cancelled due to the attacks on the World Trade Center.



### SHENMUE ONLINE

**YEAR:** 2004
**PLATFORM:** PC

■ This joint production with JC Entertainment was an attempt to launch Sega into the MMORPG market, which was particularly strong in Asia. However, production was fraught with problems, from the withdrawal of JC Entertainment in 2005 to poor fan response to the game's early images.



### PSY-PHI

**YEAR:** 2005
**PLATFORM:** Arcade

■ *Psy-Phi* was one of the first games announced for Sega's Lindbergh arcade board and Suzuki's first arcade project after leaving the AM2 division. The game allowed players to fight it out with touchscreen controls. Sega decided not to release the game due to concerns about the heat generated by the touchscreen technology.



configured, so a report claiming that all of the characters that were supposed to be in the Warehouse District had all gone missing was a big deal," Suzuki explains. Take that in – every single character appearing in the game, from crucial main cast members to the most minor non-player characters, had a daily routine. Thankfully for Suzuki and his team, the fix was easier than expected. "After a while, another report came in exclaiming, 'They're all in the convenience store!' And sure enough, there was a mob of people all stacked up at the entrance so the ones inside could not get out. We ended up having to reposition the merchandise counter and widen the automatic doors so the characters could enter and leave freely."

While critics and players generally admired the game's amazing visuals, *Shenmue*'s detailed simulation of everyday life's mundane details wasn't to everyone's tastes, especially as the game was slow-paced. While it was generally well-received, *Shenmue* ultimately proved unprofitable despite selling 1.2 million copies, simply by virtue of the massive development costs. However, with the engine and assets already in place, a sequel quickly followed in 2001.

*Shenmue II* dialled back the detail, made things friendlier to players and quickened the pacing considerably. It certainly feels like a more action-oriented game that the original. "I think it feels that way because we implemented a lot of battle sequences in *Shenmue II* that we couldn't do in *Shenmue*," Suzuki offers. "We added many improvements to *Shenmue II* by looking at the first game," he adds. "For example, in *Shenmue* if you had promised to meet someone at a certain time, you had no choice but to hang around waiting for time to pass, so in *Shenmue II* we added a 'wait' option. We tried to provide some relief for the users in ways like these." But despite an Xbox release providing a wider platform, *Shenmue II* wasn't hugely successful either and work on the series ground to a halt.

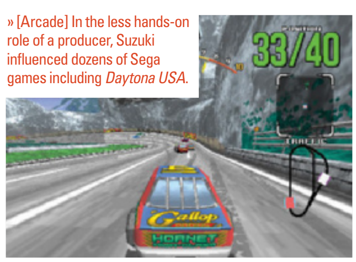
**After acting as producer on *Virtua Cop 3* and *OutRun 2* in 2003, Suzuki left AM2 to form his own development** group within Sega. Not much came of this though, as all but one of its projects were cancelled – the lone exception being *Sega Race TV*, an ill-received arcade game developed by AM Plus in 2008. Since then, he's focused on his own studio Ys Net, which has largely produced mobile games (many based on his old Sega properties), but is now moving into big-budget development – and developing a game many thought would never happen. At E3 2015, a *Shenmue III* Kickstarter was announced, and swiftly demolished a variety of records on the crowdfunding platform. "There was a larger response then I thought it would get," Suzuki confides. "I was touched by the feelings of all the fans that have waited ten years for this, and I would like to thank them all."

Of course, now that he's running a company, Suzuki can't dedicate himself entirely to the development process. "Creative work is much more interesting then management, but being able to once more take up the many challenges of *Shenmue III* is something that makes me terribly happy," he says. Likewise, it's a challenging project for all involved, not least because the budget is so much smaller than that of the original games. Suzuki admits to being a little daunted by the task. "Sure there is some uneasiness, but this is a new challenge for the new me, and if there is support for that, I could not be happier."

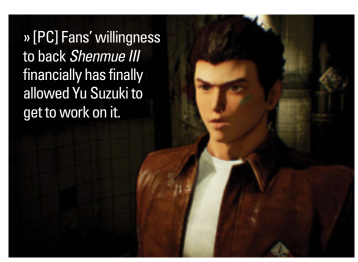
While Suzuki has a company to run as well as development to do, it's obvious that *Shenmue III* is a personal project for him and his fingerprints are all over it, so we can't help but ask what it will actually be like. "*Shenmue III* will consist of three main areas. The first area is Bailu Village, which I hope will awaken feelings of nostalgia in the fans. The second area will focus on *Shenmue*'s freedom, which I aim to make to make on the scale of Dobuita. For the third area I would like to do something different and introduce some new gameplay features."

Speaking of *Shenmue* and the number three, that's exactly the place it reached in our ranking of our Greatest Games list, proving that for those who click with it, it's an unforgettable experience. How does Suzuki feel about the strong feelings the series continues to inspire? "I was surprised by the fan's reaction," he says. "To have your game remembered from 15 years ago, and then be chosen as third greatest game, as a creator it is truly an honour."

So what's on the plate for the future? As one of gaming's pioneers, we're not surprised to find that new projects rank highly on the list. "I have many plans for games I want to make," he says. "I am interested in making a fantastical kind of RPG." But having been handed the opportunity to move on with his key work, Suzuki's focus right now has to be on *Shenmue III* – and that's decidedly where it is. "We can finally begin with the development," he tells us. "Expect good things from *Shenmue* revitalized with the latest technologies. For everyone who wants to support it, we have made a PayPal option available. I thank you so much for all of your support." We can only hope that support is repaid with a game worthy of Yu Suzuki's legacy – his influence has been sorely missed in recent years. *



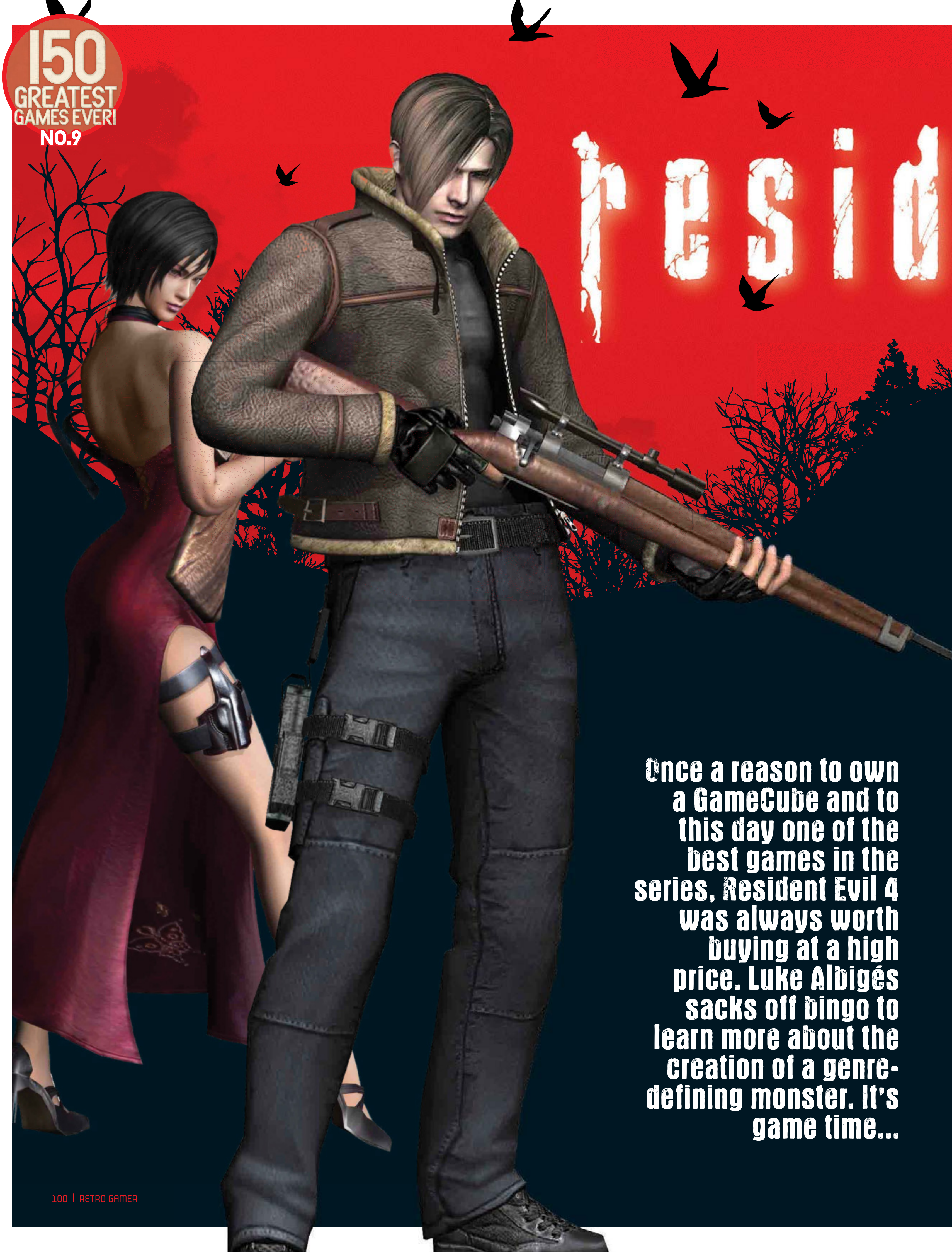
» [Arcade] In the less hands-on role of a producer, Suzuki influenced dozens of Sega games including *Daytona USA*.



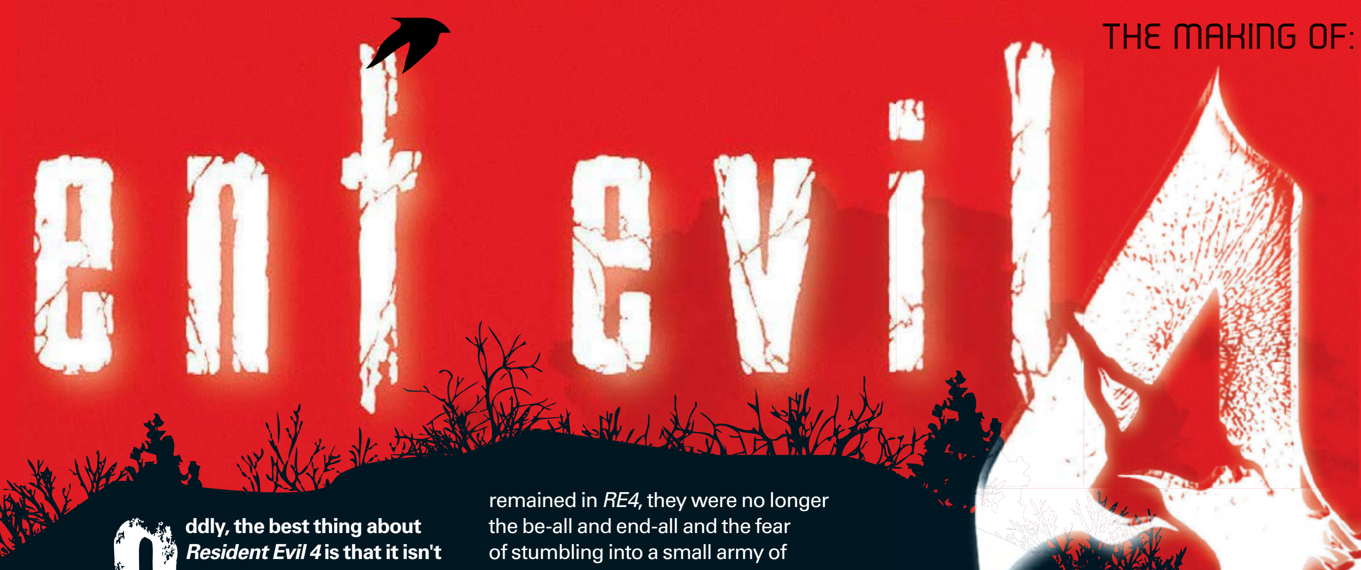
» [PC] Fans' willingness to back *Shenmue III* financially has finally allowed Yu Suzuki to get to work on it.

150 GREATEST GAMES EVER! NO.9

# resid



**Once a reason to own a GameCube and to this day one of the best games in the series, Resident Evil 4 was always worth buying at a high price. Luke Albigés sacks off bingo to learn more about the creation of a genre-defining monster. It's game time...**



**Oddly, the best thing about *Resident Evil 4* is that it isn't really a *Resident Evil* game. With the established survival horror formula** perfected by three PlayStation games and several spin-offs, both the development team and fans wanted something new, something different, something challenging. This didn't come easily for Capcom, with the team exploring supernatural elements and the paranormal in early development as workarounds to the growing zombie fatigue, but it's hard to argue that the final product wasn't worth the wait. Eschewing static camera angles for an over-the-shoulder affair that quickly became the staple for third-person shooters and leaving the brain-munching idiots to rot in order to let a parasite-ridden populous take centre stage, this was no longer survival horror – it was survival *terror*.

It's a subtle differeance in terms of language, sure, but it's an important distinction to make. *Resi*'s foundations were in classic B-movies and horror films – static cameras allowed for staged scares and classic cinematography techniques, the action contained and controlled by the director at all times. While elements of horror and certain tropes remained in *RE4*, they were no longer the be-all and end-all and the fear of stumbling into a small army of villagers armed with rudimentary tools or just one obvious threat (the likes of mini-bosses Dr Salvatore and El Gigante reminiscent of stalking threats Mr X and Nemesis in previous games) without the provisions or skills to see the task through proved genuinely terrifying. Horror is a jump scare around the next corner when the cameraman decides to reveal it; terror is finding yourself out of your depth only to hear the ominous revving of a chainsaw nearby. See? There's a difference, alright…

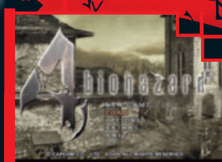
"Our focus was on creating something completely new with *Resident Evil 4* and pushing the series in a new direction," explains producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi. "In the course of development, we created prototypes and tested them out – if we weren't satisfied with them, we started from scratch. In the end, we went through four different versions of the game before settling on the direction in which we wanted to go." Psychological horror was then still very much *Silent Hill*'s domain, while the paranormal stuff Capcom tried sort of went against the grain of a series grounded in its own hokey science with various strains of virus, yet trying typical zombies only made the game feel stale and familiar. "By that point in the series, zombies were simply no longer scary to players," Kobayashi confirms. "They had become cannon fodder that you could defeat with ease. We wanted something not like the enemies you'd seen before that would bring back the sense of the unfamiliar and the frightening, and that was the genesis of Los Ganados."

The parasite-based nature of these new definitely-not-zombie enemies was the light bulb moment Capcom had been waiting for. As well as granting full creative freedom to go nuts with new and inventive enemy types – from mutated bugs that had been exposed to the parasite to once-human hosts with an aptitude for (or lack thereof) these powerful parasitic friends – it also managed to tie into the existing lore as a new line of biological weapon experiments, ticking every box while still scrubbing the slate clean for a whole new ▶



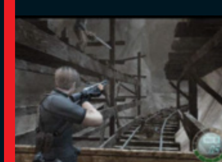
## RESIDENT EVIL 4 101

■ Capcom's fourth *Resident Evil* release was a game-changer, reinventing both the franchise and the genre forever. Leon S. Kennedy returns and must battle all sorts of enemies as he searches for the President's daughter in a remote European location. It's a stunning action game and Shinji Mikami's finest work.

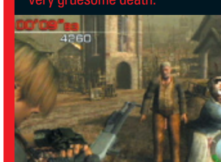



## IN THE KNOW

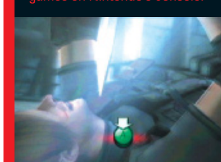
» **PUBLISHER:** Capcom
» **DEVELOPER:** Capcom Production Studio 4
» **RELEASED:** 2005
» **PLATFORM:** Various
» **GENRE:** Action



» [GameCube] Take the chainsaw dude out quickly or you'll suffer a very gruesome death.

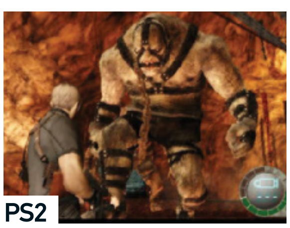


» [GameCube] Even today, *Resi 4* remains one of the best looking games on Nintendo's console.



» [GameCube] Leon's tense battle with Krauser remains one of the best QTEs we've ever seen.

## CONVERSION CAPERS The best and worst versions of Capcom's classic



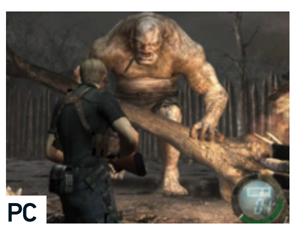
### PS2

■ While much was initially made of *RE4*'s GameCube exclusivity, it wasn't long before the game appeared on the significantly more popular PS2… and with additional content that wasn't in the GC original, as the ultimate kick in the teeth for the Nintendo faithful.



### Wii

■ Regarded as the definitive version of *Resi 4*, thanks to motion controls which added to (rather than detracted from, as was often the case) the action. With the best visuals, the best controls and all of the content included, this remains the best way to enjoy this all-time classic.



### PC

■ Launching without mouse support is a sure-fire way to piss off the 'Master Race', and the weak port didn't help matters – PC hardware could do better and PC players expected better. Many will have missed out on a great game or simply played it on console instead.



### HD (PS3/360)

■ Capcom hasn't exactly been on-point with its HD remaster game – *DMC* was passable, *REmake* a little better but this was not the loving makeover *Resi 4* deserved. If everything is going to look muddy anyway, why wouldn't you just stick with the Wii version?

150 GREATEST GAMES EVER!
NO.9



» [GameCube] The laser sight of your gun allows you to pick of individual body parts.



## DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

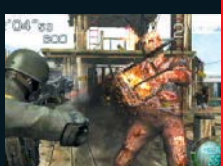
**VIEWTFUL JOE**
**SYSTEM:** VARIOUS
**YEAR:** 2003

**P.N.03**
**SYSTEM:** GAMECUBE
**YEAR:** 2003

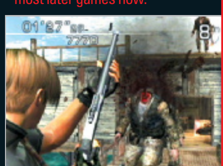
**KILLER7** (PICTURED)
**SYSTEM:** VARIOUS
**YEAR:** 2005



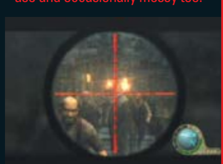
» [PS3] This nightmare is terrifying and requires lots of bullets to put down.



» [GameCube] Mercenaries was an excellent minigame and is in most later games now.



» [GameCube] The weapons of *Resi 4* are amazingly satisfying to use and occasionally messy too.



» [GameCube] The sniper rifle especially useful for when you protect Ashley.

roster of horrible foes and challenges to overcome.

The shift of premise was necessary in order to avoid burning fans out on zombies, but the switch to more action-centric gameplay was a little less expected.

"We took a look at games that were popular in the western market at the time, around 2005, and it was clear to us that games which let you aim and shoot with precision in that third-person style were the way to go," reveals Kobayashi. Many thought this shooter pandering was the downfall of the ill-received *Resident Evil 5*, but it turns out the wheels were already in motion to develop greater interest in the western market a full decade ago. Granted, later sequels have had a tendency to stride boldly into full-on shooter territory where *Resi 4* merely had a bit of a paddle (be careful of Del Lago, guys...) but still, if you want to point fingers and name a culprit for the recent action bent, you'll only find yourself prosecuting one of the greatest games ever made.

It's all too easy to take great game design for granted, and even from the various pre-release builds of the game, you can really get a feel for just how many different camera placements the team must have gone through before settling on the version that shipped. Beta footages shows a hybrid of fixed and aim-based cameras, while you can see various heights, depths and angles that all offer different takes on the action in that early footage. "Getting the position of the camera behind the player just right was a very arduous process of refinement," Kobayashi admits. "It's just one part of the game but you really need to nail it as it influences every other aspect of the gameplay." Ever since, we've played countless third-person games where the camera just feels 'off' in a way that's hard to describe – too floaty, perhaps, just slightly too far away or maybe too stiffly attached to athe player character – which just adds more weight to the argument that *Resi 4* did this better than pretty much all games that had come before and indeed many since. Way to go, Capcom.

> **"It was clear to us that games which let you aim and shoot with precision were the way to go"**
> Hiroyuki Kobayashi

**There were other challenges ahead of the team due to the quicker pace of the game, too. Players would quickly** grow used to enjoying huge-scale encounters (either in terms of enemy numbers or sheer size) and where the tension of the original games allowed for minimal enemy placement for maximum effect (thus slowing the rate at which players could adapt to each enemy), having them appear in bigger groups and more frequently meant that something had to be done to avoid having people feel they had mastered a new enemy type in a matter of minutes. When pressed for the greatest design challenge during development of this game, in fact, Kobayashi cites this exact issue as the main hurdle in the game's development. "Probably the process of working out what kind of creatures should show up in the second half of the game," he confirms. "By that point you've become more accustomed to Ganados so keeping things interesting while remaining true to the atmosphere of the game is a difficult balance."

Capcom clearly had its fair share of challenges in steering the franchise in this bold new direction, so it's interesting how the team decided to pass these onto the player. One such example of this is the inventory system – gone is the simplistic small grid where every item, regardless of bulk or weight, takes up one slot, replaced by a much larger grid in the form of the upgradeable attache case, where item size determines how many 'blocks' it takes up. The existing system for micromanaging your inventory had become stale and overly simple by this point (just take an Ink Ribbon, a healing item, your primary weapon and some reserve ammo, leaving room for ferrying puzzle items around) but this ingenious new mechanic made us think about what we were carrying and why, becoming almost a mini-game in its own right. "Funnily enough, *Tetris* was the inspiration," Kobayashi laughs. "I thought it would be fun if you had to play a puzzle game where you tried to fit the pieces in together as best you could without any gaps to maximise efficiency."

# THE CAPCOM FIVE

**The quintet that defined the GameCube for Capcom**

## P.N.03



■ We're rather fond of the first of Capcom's planned quintet as it plays like an old school shoot-'em-up. Not everyone was pleased however, with some feeling Capcom rushed to get it out before the end of the financial year and that it suffered as a result. Mikami's later work on *Vanquish* serves to show what could have been had Vanessa's ill-fated adventure been allowed a little more time in the oven…

## VIEWTIFUL JOE



■ This unapologetically hardcore platform-brawler succeeded on many levels – bringing back a long-dead genre, adding another amazing character to Capcom's star-studded roster and delivering a game that turned an obvious gimmick into an excellent core gameplay pillar. It wasn't huge but multiple sequels and Joe's inclusion in *Marvel Vs Capcom 3* prove that there's a lot of love for this game.

## RESIDENT EVIL 4



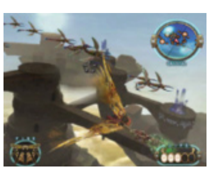
■ A stunning reinvention of the horror series, nay genre, it'd be hard to argue against *RE4* being the highlight of the Capcom Five. GameCube's best-looking game at the time and a peerless lesson in how to rejuvenate a franchise, this is deserving of its classic status and could easily be argued to be the game of its generation. Yes, even without Barry Burton. We don't understand it either.

## kILLER7



■ Stylish, confusing, controversial, divisive, just plain weird… *killer7* is all of these things and then some. Combining light puzzle-solving with on-rails shooter elements across seven different playable characters, *killer7* is one of the most original and inventive games ever green-lit by a major publisher. You'll either love it or hate it, but you'll need to play it to know which camp you fall into…

## DEAD PHOENIX



■ Sadly, the Capcom Five will never be completed – this *Panzer Dragoon*-esque shooter was canceled prior to release. It wasn't all that difficult to see this coming, to be fair – the other four games had a lot of pre-launch build-up (including early versions being shown that were quite different to what we actually got), while only a handful of screens exist for this doomed shooter.

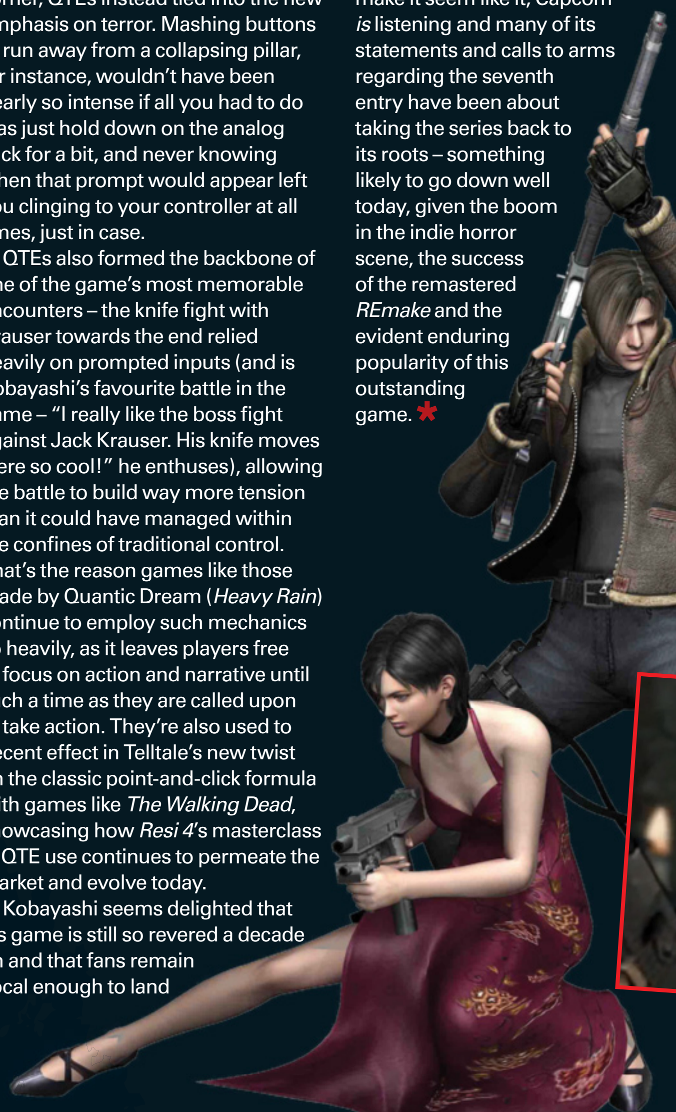





**While it might be one of the all-time greats, however, *Resi 4* still has a lot to answer for. Its use of** QTEs – which Capcom managed to employ to great effect – became something of a touchstone for other developers looking for an easy way to incorporate cinematic events into their games without fully wresting control away from the player, but few managed to pull them off nearly as well. Their proliferation across games of all kinds quickly made players come to hate them, although Capcom's execution of them was generally masterful – just as jump scares could once hide around any corner, QTEs instead tied into the new emphasis on terror. Mashing buttons to run away from a collapsing pillar, for instance, wouldn't have been nearly so intense if all you had to do was just hold down on the analog stick for a bit, and never knowing when that prompt would appear left you clinging to your controller at all times, just in case.

QTEs also formed the backbone of one of the game's most memorable encounters – the knife fight with Krauser towards the end relied heavily on prompted inputs (and is Kobayashi's favourite battle in the game – "I really like the boss fight against Jack Krauser. His knife moves were so cool!" he enthuses), allowing the battle to build way more tension than it could have managed within the confines of traditional control. That's the reason games like those made by Quantic Dream (*Heavy Rain*) continue to employ such mechanics so heavily, as it leaves players free to focus on action and narrative until such a time as they are called upon to take action. They're also used to decent effect in Telltale's new twist on the classic point-and-click formula with games like *The Walking Dead*, showcasing how *Resi 4*'s masterclass in QTE use continues to permeate the market and evolve today.

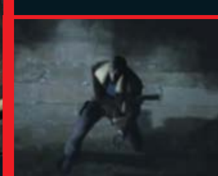
Kobayashi seems delighted that his game is still so revered a decade on and that fans remain vocal enough to land it a spot in our all-time top ten. "It's an incredible honour that makes me very happy indeed," he tells us. "It's been ten years since the game came out, and it's great to see how much the fans have loved the game in that time. In 2016, *Resident Evil* as a series is coming up to its 20th anniversary, and not just me but everyone at Capcom will work hard to keep making great games for our fans to enjoy!" It's fair to say that most *Resi* fans have fallen off the hype train in recent years, disillusioned with the franchise's descent into action and longing for the return of survival horror. While new announcements like *Umbrella Corps* might not make it seem like it, Capcom *is* listening and many of its statements and calls to arms regarding the seventh entry have been about taking the series back to its roots – something likely to go down well today, given the boom in the indie horror scene, the success of the remastered *REmake* and the evident enduring popularity of this outstanding game. *

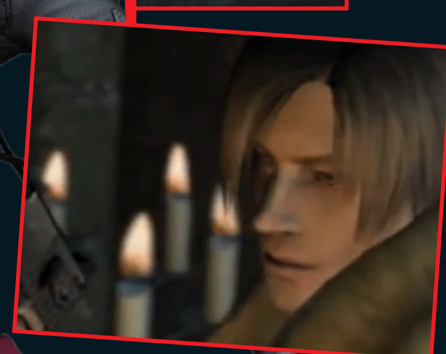




## RESIDENT EVIL 3.5

There were actually a number of prototypes and demos made for *Resident Evil 4* that were pretty far removed from the game we actually got. The initial announcement trailer for the game was set in a castle, setting up a more gothic tone for what was to be a more traditional survival horror game with fixed camera angles. The next wave of publicity saw another new angle, this time something more psychological. Mechanically, it was halfway between classic *Resi* and *RE4* as we know it – camera was fixed for gameplay but would swing into Leon's shoulder whenever a weapon was aimed. There was reportedly a third dry run that was never shown which reverted to zombie enemies, apparently canned early on for feeling to familiar. In each of these early directions, however, you can see a little bit of the DNA that makes *Resi 4* the classic it is.





# RETRORATED




>> There's just the one review this month, but fortunately it's a good one that pays plenty of loving reference to the action films of the Eighties and Nineties. Normal business will resume in our next issue






» [PC] In classic action movie fashion, stages end with you leaping atop a helicopter to escape while everything explodes.

# Broforce

## UNBROLIEVABLY EXPLOSIVE

### INFORMATION

» **FEATURED SYSTEM:** PC

» **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** MAC, LINUX

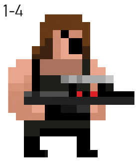
» **RELEASED:** OUT NOW

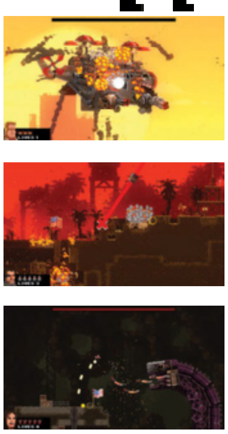
» **PRICE:** £11.99

» **PUBLISHER:** DEVOLVER DIGITAL

» **DEVELOPER:** FREE LIVES

» **PLAYERS:** 1-4





» [PC] There are some pretty huge bosses that you need to take on throughout the course of the game.

**This run-and-gunner is built around a brilliant concept. You start each of its 2D levels blasting your way from left to right as a random 'Bro' – developer Free Lives' own versions of characters from classic action movies, such as Rambro, B.A. Broracus and Brobocop**. You've only got one life and will die in one hit. This encourages you to free the imprisoned POWs scattered throughout each stage, thereby transforming you into another of the game's huge roster of characters and granting you an extra life.

With the game's quickfire levels lasting no more than a few minutes, this means that you'll often spend but a few dozen seconds as a particular character. One second you're blasting huge chunks out of the stage with Bro In Black (Agent J from *Men In Black*), the next you're slow motion punching your way through goons as Mr Anderbro (Neo from *The Matrix*), or calling in an airstrike with Brodell Walker (Chuck Norris' Texas Ranger).

Those quickfire transformations play brilliantly into *Broforce*'s sense of fun and chaos. Free Lives knows that with over 30 characters to play as, you're going to want to sample as many as possible to see if you can work out who they're based on and try out their unique abilities. That's precisely why it has you switching between them so often – it doesn't want to get in the way of your enjoyment. 'Don't worry about hording those limited use special abilities,' *Broforce* seems to say. 'Just use them all now and blow some stuff up, there'll be another character along any second now, and then you can blow some stuff up in a whole new way!'

Speaking of *Broforce*'s love of fun and chaos, this homage cum parody of patriotic American action follows the example set by its source material in that almost every problem can be solved by making things go boom. Not only can you destroy the enemies in your path, but the stage itself, meaning that it is possible to tunnel your way through a stage rather than fighting foes. More commonly, though, it means that chunks of the stage frequently collapse all around you as enemy bodies fly left and right and explosive barrels littered across the stage blow the

### BRIEF HISTORY

» *Broforce* started life as a 2012 game jam project called *Rambro*. Developer Free Lives then added a cooperative mode to that prototype, sparking the idea of giving the player a roster of 'Bros' to play as. Prior to release, the game spent a couple of years in early access as Free Lives added new modes, Bros and stages.



» [PC] Exclamation marks let you know that enemies have been alerted to your presence. It's too late for this guy, though.




### ✱ PICKS OF THE MONTH



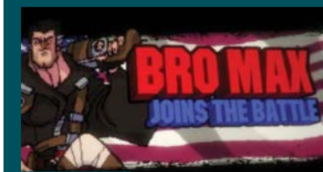

**DARRAN**
**Broforce**
I've always been a fan of run-and-gun games and this one is great fun with lots of lovely references to the Eighties and Nineties.




**NICK**
**Broforce**
This is a lovely chaotic mess which itches both your nostalgia gland and your trigger finger. A solid, entertaining blaster.

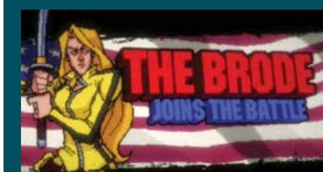
## BROS IN ARMS

**We break down some of Broforce's huge roster of characters. Go bros!**



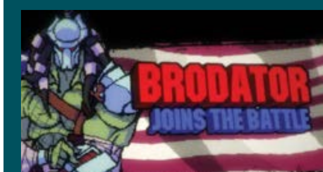

### BRO MAX

■ Based on Mad Max, this Bro's shotgun has poor range, but is deadly up close. Max's special attack is a boomerang that can deflect bullets and bounce off walls.




### THE BRODE

■ Just like Beatrix Kiddo in *Kill Bill*, The Brode wields a samurai sword in battle. Her five fingured death punch special ability is cool, if not particularly useful.



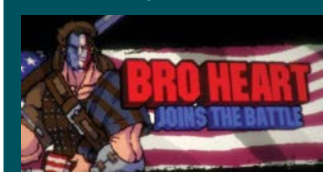

### BRODATOR

■ We think Brodator is one of the best Bros. His spear attack is powerful and can strike at range, and his Predator-inspired lock-on attack is incredibly useful.




### DOUBLEBRO SEVEN

■ His pistol is far from being the best standard attack, but we like the fact that he's got a variety of gadgets for his special abilities – including a laser watch.




### BRO HEART

■ Bro Heart is a melee Bro with a slow attack speed. His special attack is more funny than it is useful, with him shouting "FREEDOM" to send enemies fleeing.

surroundings to smithereens in chain reactions set off by your gunfire. It is at moments like these that the game is at its best: moments when you're tearing through a level at abandon, destroying all in your path with explosions, to the point that there's so much destruction, you can barely tell what's going on.

As much enjoyment as that over-the-top action offers, it can occasionally be a problem. The fact that it's often hard to see what's happening as a level unpredictably blows itself to pieces while you're being flooded by enemies means you will often die without even knowing why. You won't care in the early going, but as the game gets harder, it can become a real frustration.

That extends to some of the game's tougher bosses. While we did like the fact that the design of those huge ostentatious bosses reminded us of old school shooters, the closer we got to the end of the game, the more obvious it became that the difficulty you're going to have with them is to a certain extent down to luck. Some of the Bros attacks and abilities are clearly more useful than others, but there's no way of choosing which one you will spawn as. This means that you'll occasionally struggle with a boss before being blessed with a combination that makes it a pushover, making it feel like you beat it because of good fortune rather than skill. That's only added to by the fact that we found that standing in a certain place would mean that the boss wouldn't be able to get to you, or would just stop attacking.

The other thing that becomes clear as you go through the game is that it is a little repetitive. That's in large part because the fact that the game's stages are destructible means that there's only so far level design can go to differentiate each one. Having said that, *Broforce* does find other ways to freshen things up a bit. Enemies based on the Xenomorphs from the *Alien* films are introduced into the game midway through, before it then takes a detour into hell, bringing demonic foes to the battlefield. Add in a mech suit here, an *Aliens*-style set-piece there, and you find that even if the game's core is formulaic, it is pretty good at distracting you from that fact.

Take *Broforce* too seriously and you're going to get frustrated by deaths you could never have predicted, courtesy of stages rigged to explode spectacularly. One look at this action movie lovefest packed full of character, however, should tell you that taking this seriously is most certainly *not* something you should do. You have to embrace the chaos, you have to laugh at your Bros getting crushed by a falling block that you were pushed back into by Arnie's ridiculously powerful minigun fire (something that you most certainly will do when it happens to a friend playing with you in four-player co-op). Approached with that spirit, *Broforce* is a lot of fun. ✱

**Paul Walker-Emig**

## In a nutshell

**This shooter is a fun take on the Eighties American action hero that creates enjoyment, and occasionally a little frustration, out of explosive chaos.**

7
RetroGamer_Mag scored **7** for
Broforce
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

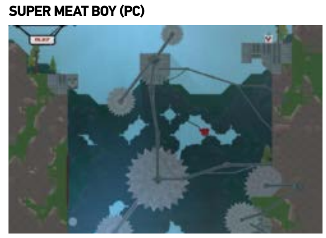


### ✱WHY NOT TRY

▼ SOMETHING OLD
**CONTRA (ARCADE)**



▼ SOMETHING NEW
**SUPER MEAT BOY (PC)**






» [PC] This is classic *Broforce*; there's so much exploding you can barely see what's happening.

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## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Hello **Retro Gamer**,
Just a quick note to say thanks you for your wonderful recent article on *Arkanoid*. I am a great fan of the game, my most favourite conversion being the C64 version.

I have attached an 'impossible' level 12 picture I created called 'In My Arkanoid Dreams' and wondered if you could show it to your readers in your magazine? I can imagine the chaos if the scene in the picture was real. Any other *Arkanoid* fans out there?

Thanks for the amazing magazine, keep up the great work.

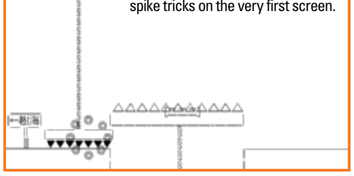
Michael Chivers

**Many thanks for the kind words, although we fear our dreams will be haunted by that *Arkanoid* mock-up. It reminds us of those practically impossible games like *I Wanna Be The Guy* and *The Big Adventure Of Owata's Life*. We don't know how we'd cope with it, to be honest with you.**

## MAG LAUNCHER

Hello **Retro Gamer,**
I have been a subscriber to your magazine for a number of years now and I find most of the articles fascinating. Another bonus is, because of such articles, I have a new found appreciation for many old games, which without your magazine I would have never played. Growing up in the late-Eighties and early-Nineties my first computer was a Commodore 64, I then received a NES for Christmas 1991

» [PC] *The Big Adventure Of Owata's Life* features two mean spike tricks on the very first screen.



(I think), it was then my love for gaming really blossomed.

Like probably the majority of people from the same era, I used to purchase a number of gaming magazines, ranging from titles such as: *TOTAL!*, *Sega Power*, *Mega* and *Game Zone*. This particular era seemed to be a boom period for games magazines with seemingly a new title appearing on the newsagents shelf every week!

Once article I would love to see in your magazine and I do not think it has been covered previously, is the rise of the gaming magazines and how magazines have had to evolve over years to stay relevant in this internet age when information on new games and reviews is now just a click away. I would love to see interviews with such figures as Steve Jarratt and Julian Rignall etc, who launched and edited many titles during the Eighties and Nineties. Would this be something you would consider doing in a future issue?

Darren Levesley

**We're glad you're enjoying the magazine! We've run a few features on individual magazines over the years – *Crash*, *Zzap!*, *Maximum* and *Sega Saturn Magazine* all come to mind. However, we have never done a piece on the games magazine business as a whole. It's a rather tricky one to put together – there are certain restrictions on what material we can reproduce, which makes it hard to illustrate the story. Is there demand out there for a feature of this kind? Let us know!**

## STAR LETTER

### NICHE TO SEE YOU

Dear **Retro Gamer**,
My colleague spied me reading **Retro Gamer** on the train recently, and said to me, 'I love your magazine, it's so delightfully niche.' And to be fair she's right.

But isn't it incredible how something so niche can shape you so powerfully. Retro games are part of my identity, defining in my childhood a large part of who I am as an adult. Through them I've made friendships and memories to last a lifetime. They've given me a playfulness which doesn't age, and tunes which never leave my head. They've made me laugh and cry and dream and marvel. It may be niche, but, to us, it's everything. And on that note, thank you for sharing it with us for 150 inspiring, evergreen, nostalgic issues. You've certainly found your niche, and long may it continue.

Tim Fitches

**Thank you, Tim. It's definitely a cliché to say it, but everyone from the office team to the freelancers has a genuine love of retro games. Whenever a reader is inspired to pick up a game they missed or even just revisit a favourite, that's when we know that we're doing good work – we've effectively shared our passion for the games we love. That's why we chose this milestone issue to celebrate the games that mean the most to us as a community. We were heartened by the massive response we got, because it shows just how much your favourites mean to you. It's nice to know that you get as excited about sharing your own top picks as we do sharing ours. Retro gaming is definitely a niche hobby, and it's always going to be a broad church, but we like to think it's an inclusive niche and it's one that we're very proud to be part of.**




### DISCUSSED THIS MONTH

**All The Anniversaries**

Everything seems to be going down this month as Drew's been on Retro Gamer for a year and Nick's been here two. Meanwhile, Darran just hit ten years and he's done so alongside the tenth birthday of the Xbox 360, so naturally he's just started collecting for Microsoft's second console. Oh, and Jon's been on the mag for three years.



## HASTA LA PASTA

Dear **Retro Gamer,**
I really like your magazine and I really like looking at the screenshots.

My favourite game ever is *Shenmue* and I'm really, really, happy that *Shenmue III* is happening, thanks to Yu Suzuki. What I wanted to know is what your favourite type of pasta is?

Colin Etherington

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» [Dreamcast] Here's a nice screenshot of Ryo treading on Guizhang's foot. Just for you, Colin!

**Great news Colin – we have got an interview with the man himself in this very issue, and he talks a little about the whole *Shenmue* series – just turn back to page 96. We're looking forward to seeing what he and his team can pull off on modern hardware. Oh, and as for our favourite pasta, it's easily fusilli. Spirals, man.**

## SHELF STACKING STAMINA

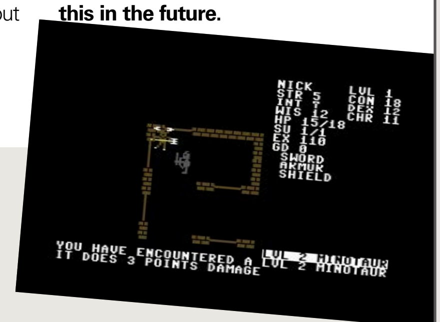
Hi **RG**,

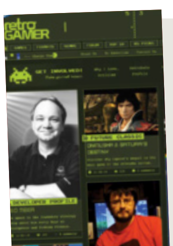
My wife has always been someone who played videogames. Not a gamer per se, but she had systems throughout her youth and still enjoys a game with me from time to time. So, when she asked me to help her remember her favourite Commodore 64 game from childhood, I was distressed that I was completely unsuccessful at figuring out what she was describing. After years of piecing it together, she finally figured out the name of the game. *Telengard*. I plan on picking the game up at an auction site, but have you ever done a feature on it? I would love to get the back issue if you have. And if you haven't, maybe do us a favour…

Great mag!

Sterling Cole

**We get asked to identify games enough to know how frustrating it is when you can't figure out which game someone's referring to, especially when it's over the course of years. We're glad that you finally managed to do it, though! To answer your question, we've never actually featured *Telengard* in the magazine, nor have we covered its publisher, Avalon Hill. There's an interesting history there, though, as companies moving from board games to software is an unusual move, so we'll see if we can do this in the future.**



# From the forum

» www.retrogamer.net/forum

**Every month, Retro Gamer asks a question on the forum and prints the best replies. This month we wanted to know…**

## Your best gaming birthday present

**psj3809**

Getting my first computer, the Spectrum+. Had to wait a bit longer than my mates, I think my parents wanted to make sure this wasn't a six month fad kinda thing. Loved playing with my mate's rubber one (the Spectrum) and had lots of games (ahem) on C90 ready for that moment when I got my Speccy+.

**yakmag**

My 14th birthday, I got *Sheep In Space*, *Jet Set Willy* and *Tales Of The Arabian Nights* for my C64. *Tales* was my first game that had speech, I got special permission to put the computer in the lounge so I could play it on the 'Big Telly' (anyone else do that?) and got everyone crowded round so they could hear the computer talk. I was more impressed than they were!

**sirclive1**

*Sabre Wulf* - August 1984 ,I'd been waiting weeks for it, read the reviews and spent pretty much my entire 13th birthday on it!

**LAIS**

It was actually a very thoughtful birthday present from my much younger brother that got me started on **Retro Gamer**. He's 11 years younger than me, and while I was in uni, he saved up his pocket money to buy me a copy of the magazine – as he'd remembered hearing me tell someone it looked interesting. Maybe not the most spectacular present, but certainly the most meaningful.

**Bluce_Ree**

I wanted a Commodore 16 for my ninth birthday (because my mate had one) but my mum brought me back a ZX Spectrum from Dixons. I don't know why but I'm forever thankful that she did!

**antsbull**

When I got *Police Quest 1* and *Police Quest 2* for the same birthday, after having spent the previous months staring at the Sierra catalogue and a *C&VG* review of *Police Quest* imagining what it would be like to play those games, and they both exceeded my expectations!

**ArchaicKoala**

I was taken to see *Jurassic Park* which was great but it was made better by the wall of arcade machines in the cinema foyer! I managed to finish *Simpsons Arcade* with some random people before watching the film!

**David**

All my gaming stuff was always for Christmas. Only birthday I remember getting a game was when I chose *Tazmania* over *Splatterhouse 2*. What a fool.


retro GAMER

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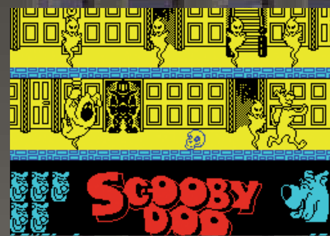
## Greatest Neo-Geo games

■ Readers reveal the best of the AES and MVS. Did your favourite make the list?



## Micro Machines 2

■ Discover how Codemasters tweaked its top-down racer to create one of the best party games of all time.




## Scooby Doo

■ We go behind the scenes of Elite's massively hyped adaptation of Hanna Barbara's lovable cartoon.



## The mighty mac

■ From its origins to its post-PC form – discover why the mac range is a perfectly great games machine




To celebrate its 25th anniversary, developers reveal how Capcom's Street Fighter II changed the genre forever


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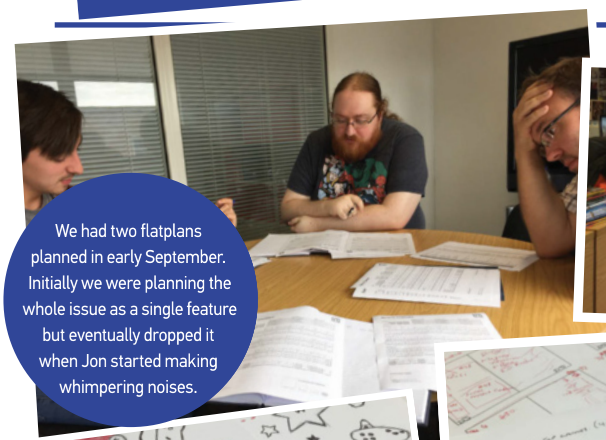

ZX SPECTRUM GAMES CODE CLUB
20 GAMES TO TYPE IN & LEARN
BACK TO BASICS
Use a real Speccy, an emulator or an App
The ZX Spectrum was hugely popular in the 1980s and was responsible for the early microcomputing boom in Great Britain and Europe. A new bluetooth version is also now available complete with Sinclair BASIC for iOS and Android.
See why thousands of Bedroom Coders took to coding so effortlessly.
Below is the "Hello World" code in BASIC.
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01111110 = 126
11011011 = 219
11011011 = 219
11111111 = 255
11111111 = 255
10011001 = 153
01000010 = 66
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# ENDGAME

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF RETRO GAMER ISSUE 150




» Whenever we are on the forum, we're always asked by readers to do a behind-the-scenes article on the creation of the magazine. As it's our 150th issue we felt a little self indulgent, so, for the first time ever, you can have an intriguing look at what we all get up to when putting together your favourite gaming magazine. Enjoy!



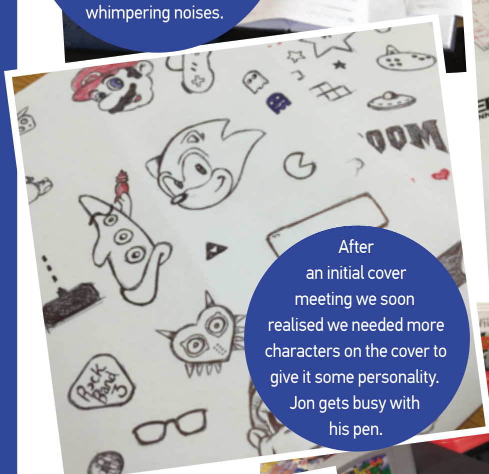
We had two flatplans planned in early September. Initially we were planning the whole issue as a single feature but eventually dropped it when Jon started making whimpering noises.



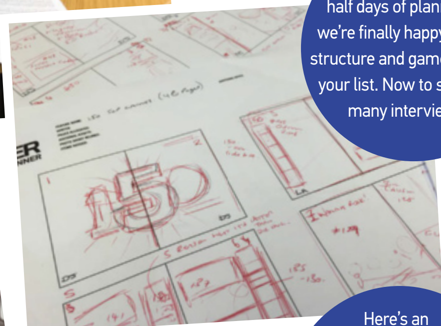
Here we are in our old work pod planning out the big feature while working on issue 149.



It's not easy being a glamorous model for images that will appear in the magazine. Here we are between shoots.



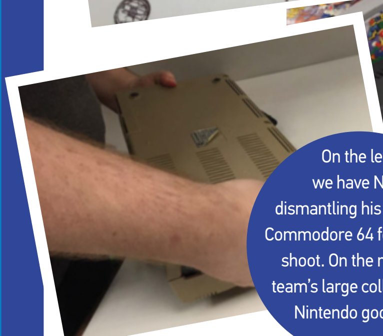
After an initial cover meeting we soon realised we needed more characters on the cover to give it some personality. Jon gets busy with his pen.



It took one and a half days of planning but we're finally happy with the structure and game focus for your list. Now to sort those many interviews…




Here's an alternate version of the cover, we collected over 120 games from the list (many of which were Nick's). It's cool, but we prefer the final cover.





On the left we have Nick dismantling his beloved Commodore 64 for a photo shoot. On the right the team's large collection of Nintendo goodies.



Drew suddenly realises he has a 56-page feature to sub and little time to do it in.



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